



# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

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## THESIS

**US INFLUENCE ON MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM  
IN THE PHILIPPINES**

by

Manuel R. Carlos

December 2003

Thesis Advisor:  
Second Reader:

Gaye Christoffersen  
Harold A. Trinkunas

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**US INFLUENCE ON MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM IN THE PHILIPPINES**

Manuel R. Carlos  
Captain, US Air Force  
B.S., University of Southern Mississippi, 1986

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
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December 2003**

Author: Manuel R. Carlos

Approved by: Gaye Christoffersen  
Thesis Advisor

Harold A. Trinkunas  
Second Reader

James J. Wirtz  
Chairman, Department of National Security Affairs

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## ABSTRACT

The United States and the Republic of the Philippines maintain a “special relationship” that can be traced back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. During this period, the US has played a significant role in the development of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to what it is today. This thesis assesses the scope of US influence in shaping military professionalism in the Philippines. Maintaining military professionalism in the AFP is fundamental in keeping positive civil-military relations in the country. As an essential element in sustaining democracy, military professionalism directly impacts the status of US-Philippines bilateral relations and ensures the advancement of the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) objectives.

This thesis analyzes several areas wherein the US has potentially played a role in influencing military professionalism, namely the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), attendance of Philippine cadets at US service academies, International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, and US-Philippines Mil-to-Mil exercises. In addition, this study also discusses the degree of US influence as the AFP deals with the Post-Cold War era, the new roles and missions related to the postmodern military, the Revolution in Military Affairs, and the US-led global war on terrorism.

Finally, this thesis presents a case study of the July 2003 failed mutiny that involved a number of junior officers. The study proposes that professionalism, or the lack thereof, is not an independent variable that determines whether or not the military will intervene in political affairs. Instead, it is a combination of strong civilian institutions, an effective and efficient military institution, solid oversight mechanisms, and highly professional armed forces that will preclude military adventurism and keep soldiers in the barracks.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. PURPOSE

The objective of this thesis is to assess the scope of US influence in shaping military professionalism in the Philippines.

### B. IMPORTANCE

The professional character of the Philippine officer corps may be defined within the framework of Samuel Huntington's concept of the military professional. Huntington explains the three distinguishing characteristics of the professional officer: expertise, social responsibility, and corporateness.<sup>1</sup> Maintaining military professionalism in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is fundamental in keeping positive civil-military relations in the country. As an essential element in sustaining democracy, military professionalism directly impacts the status of US-Philippines bilateral relations and ensures the advancement of the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) objectives. This thesis assesses the current status of military professionalism in the Philippines and recommends how the US can exert a positive influence to enhance civil-military relations.

### C. MAJOR QUESTIONS AND ARGUMENT

Where does the US influence begin and how did military professionalism in the Philippines evolve? This thesis explores the “special relations” between the US and the Philippines since the colonial period and focuses on how the US has played a role in influencing military professionalism. While tracing this special relationship, this thesis highlights the evolution of professionalism in the Philippine officer corps.

This study analyzes several areas wherein the US has potentially played a role in influencing military professionalism. One of the areas of possible US influence concerns the composition of the curriculum at the Philippine Military

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 11.

Academy (PMA) and how much of it is patterned on the US in the area of professionalism. A second possible influence is the attendance of Philippine cadets at the US service academies. What is the impact of US-produced graduates and their role in military professionalism?

Another key US influence that this thesis explores is the Philippine participation in the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. While this program is diverse in its approach to provide training to students from allied and friendly nations, one of the examples underscored by IMET in supporting regional stability and democracy goals is “increased evidence and demonstration of militaries promoting civilian control of the military, improved civil-military relations, and support for democratization.”<sup>2</sup> In gauging US influence, this thesis studies the extent of Philippine participation in IMET and traces the participants who have advanced to fill prominent positions in the AFP or in the civilian government.

A fourth possible influence, which is discussed in this study, is the role of the joint mil-to-mil exercise. As part of the US-Philippines bilateral relations, these exercises continue to provide a unique training environment for both armed forces. What is the impact of these exercises on military professionalism and civil-military relations?

The non-renewal of US bases in the Philippines and the collapse of the Soviet Union have also reshaped US-Philippine relations. These events have changed the security environment in the country and have forced the AFP to reevaluate its capability to fulfill its roles and missions as it confronts the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Furthermore, the US-led global war on terrorism has also placed the Philippines at the forefront of the counter-terrorism campaign in Southeast Asia. These appear to be significant areas of US influence particularly in the equipping and training of the AFP through cooperative efforts under the MDT.

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<sup>2</sup> Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 2001, *Military Assistance*, 15 March 2000, <[http://www.state.gov/www/budget/fy2001/fn150/forops\\_full/150fy01\\_fo\\_military-asst.html](http://www.state.gov/www/budget/fy2001/fn150/forops_full/150fy01_fo_military-asst.html)> (28 February 2003).

Did the US positively influence military professionalism in the Philippines? While measuring US influence is difficult, this study tests the hypothesis that, overall, the US has positively influenced military professionalism in the Philippines. Furthermore, this study identifies other opportunities in which the two countries can cooperate to enhance civil-military relations.

#### **D. METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES**

The primary methodology used in this thesis is to gather empirical evidence of US influence on military professionalism based on previous studies and publications examine Philippine civil-military experience. The analytical framework identifies the roles of key positions and leaders, both civilian and military, as actors in the Philippine civil-military experience. Additionally, the level of analysis also includes the decision making process in which the civilian and military elites are involved, particularly in regards to the US-Philippines relations.

This research involves a review of the curriculum at the PMA dealing with military professionalism during the formative years of a Philippine officer. Personal interviews with faculty members or previous cadets are conducted to analyze the extent of US influence in the curriculum. This research also evaluates the impact of Philippine attendance and participation at US service academies and IMET in the AFP.

While considering Huntington's characteristics of the military professional, this thesis uses three basic criteria to assess military professionalism in the AFP. First, it considers the military's commitment to the supremacy of civilian authority. Secondly, it evaluates the AFP's success in meeting its training objectives, which translates to the expertise of the officer corps. Lastly, it evaluates the AFP officer corps' unity as a professional entity and a bureaucratic organization.

#### **E. THESIS ORGANIZATION**

Chapter II defines the model of military professionalism in the AFP using Huntington's model as a framework. While the Philippine model subscribes to

the view of professionalism with the acceptance of and subordination to civilian authority, the Philippine experience reflects that this model was challenged during the Marcos and succeeding regimes. During the Aquino presidency, coup attempts became a common occurrence in Philippine civil-military relations. The military leadership also played a key role in the ousting of President Estrada amidst corruption allegations. In July 2003, a group of junior officers perpetrated a failed mutiny once again bringing into question the issue of corruption at the highest levels of government, including the military. Is there perhaps a unique model for the Philippines?

To provide a foundation of the Philippine model of professionalism, this chapter traces the evolution of military professionalism for the past century and highlights the US influence. This section will present an overview of US-Philippines relations since July 4, 1902, when President Theodore Roosevelt declared the end of the Philippine War and the US Congress passed the “organic act” law governing the Philippines. The role of politics is also discussed and shows how the regime in power may have altered the course of military professionalism.

Chapter III discusses four areas in which the US has possibly influenced military professionalism. As the premier military institution, PMA inculcates professionalism in future officers in the AFP. This research assesses PMA’s curriculum in military professionalism and determines the extent of US influence. This chapter also traces Philippine graduates of US service academies and assesses their role in shaping military professionalism. Philippine participation in the IMET program is also discussed to evaluate the success of the program in influencing military professionalism. A fourth area of US influence concerns joint mil-to-mil exercises being conducted under US-Philippines bilateral relations. Each area is evaluated whether or not it has positively influenced military professionalism in the AFP.

Critical to the AFP’s ability to fulfill its roles and missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is how it transforms itself while maintaining viability. Chapter IV examines three issues affecting military professionalism. First, the changing

security environment and the war on terrorism have forced the AFP to reevaluate its current capabilities and work more closely with the US in the global war on terrorism. Secondly, and in light of this new security environment, the AFP is confronted with the concepts of the *postmodern* military and the *Revolution in Military Affairs* (RMA).

Finally, Chapter V presents a case study of the July 2003 botched mutiny led by a group of junior officers. The adventurism displayed by 323 officers and enlisted men presents an interesting test of professionalism in the AFP. This event challenged the legitimacy of the government and highlighted the persistent problem of graft and corruption in the country. Is this a case of a breakdown in democracy or simply a lapse in military leadership? This case study examines the events leading to the mutiny and the complaints the rebellious soldiers have levied against the Arroyo administration and the AFP leadership. Additionally, this chapter analyzes the government's response to the mutiny and the claim of a larger conspiracy involving other political actors within the Philippine government. More importantly, this case study evaluates the current state of professionalism in the AFP and its implications in civil-military relations.

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## II. THE PHILIPPINE MODEL OF PROFESSIONALISM

### A. DEFINING MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM

The professional character of the Philippine officer corps may be defined within the framework of Samuel Huntington's concept of the military professional. Huntington explains the three distinguishing characteristics of the professional officer: expertise, social responsibility, and corporateness.<sup>3</sup> He further argues that objective civilian control of the military – militarizing the military and making them a tool of the state – maximizes military professionalism.<sup>4</sup> As a Third World country, however, the Philippine experience shows with empirical evidence that there is a continuing trend of military “civilianization” and civil “militarization.” During the Marcos and Aquino regimes, for example, the professionalism of the armed forces came into question when coup attempts became a common occurrence in Philippine civil-military relations.

The *expertise* of the Philippine officer begins at PMA where the character of the officer corps is inculcated in every cadet. The Academy's four pillars of cadet development – leadership and character development; broad and basic military skills; liberal education in the arts and sciences; and, physical fitness – blends intellectual, military professional, physical, and character aspects of training to mold future officers of the AFP.<sup>5</sup> The curriculum at PMA is designed to prepare young cadets to become leaders in the profession of arms – their first steps in acquiring the competence to “manage violence.” After graduation from PMA, new officers advance to their chosen branch of service where they begin their progression in their career specialization.

The *social responsibility* of the Philippine officer corps is defined by its role in protecting society and state. Huntington prescribes that a professional military

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<sup>3</sup> Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>5</sup> PMA Curriculum, *Four Pillars of Cadet Development*,  
<<http://www.pma.ph/curriculum/Curriculum.htm>> (3 March 2003)

is “monopolized by the state.”<sup>6</sup> The Philippine Constitution is very explicit in defining the role of the AFP as “the protector of the people and the State” and provides that “civilian authority is, at all times, supreme over the military.”<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the Constitution also states that “professionalism in the armed forces and adequate remuneration and benefits of its members shall be a prime concern of the State” and insulates the military from politicization prohibiting political engagement by the military, directly or indirectly, except to vote.<sup>8</sup>

The *corporate* character of the Philippine military can be found by tracing the professional bonding of officers which begins at PMA and is strengthened as each graduating class assumes its responsibilities in the AFP. There is a certain prestige that follows every graduate because, unlike in the US, PMA is the only military academy in the Philippines for all branches of service, but the shared experience of each PMA class captures the essence of corporateness in the AFP. McCoy describes this distinctiveness of PMA graduates while comparing the socialization of two generations of PMA graduating classes. He observes that “the collective persona of every PMA class is shaped by a central paradox: each is identical yet unique.”<sup>9</sup>

With the expansion of the AFP’s mission and roles, the Philippine model of professionalism goes beyond Huntington’s framework of the military professional and objective civilian control. The AFP’s role in Civil-Military Operations (CMO) , for example, has immersed the military in local politics while dealing with insurgencies. Besides its function in economic development through CMOs, the AFP has also been tasked to augment local law enforcement to deal with the rash of kidnappings, especially in the Metro Manila area. Furthermore, the military has been involved in peacekeeping or peace-building operations such as those in East Timor, Iraq, and Liberia. Thus, the Philippine model subscribes to

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<sup>6</sup> Huntington, p.15.

<sup>7</sup> Constitution of the Philippines, Article II, Section 3.

<sup>8</sup> Constitution of the Philippines, Article 16, General Provisions, Section 5(3).

<sup>9</sup> Alfred W. McCoy, *Closer Than Brothers: Manhood at the Philippine Military Academy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 6.

Alred Stepan's "new professionalism" that politicizes the military and encourages role expansion.

## **B. THE EVOLUTION OF PROFESSIONALISM IN THE AFP**

This section presents a brief overview of the evolution of military professionalism for the past century. In order to highlight the areas of US influence from a historical perspective, this research presents particular events of US-Philippines relations since July 4, 1902, when President Theodore Roosevelt declared the end of the Philippine War, and the US the Congress passed the "organic act" law governing the Philippines.<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to note the role of politics and the actions of certain political and military elites during successive regimes and how their decisions may have shaped military professionalism unique to the Philippines, yet with a distinct US influence.

### **1. US Colonial Period**

During the Philippine-American War, the US laid the foundation for a modern Philippine military by recruiting "native" soldiers to serve as scouts and interpreters and later to be inducted by the US Army as part of the Philippine Scouts.<sup>11</sup> The initial force structure, however, did not allow for Filipinos to serve in leadership positions because General Elwell Otis, the American Commander at that time, considered even the Filipino elites "unfit for command."<sup>12</sup> But that would change as America's "native" regiments would soon play a substantial role in the ongoing pacification as part of the Philippine Scouts and the Philippine Constabulary, which later included a minority of Filipino officers.

During the First World War, the number of Filipino officers began to increase when over a hundred American officers resigned to join the war efforts in Europe.<sup>13</sup> The increase in "native" officers can be directly attributed to the

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<sup>10</sup> Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1989), p. 436.

<sup>11</sup> McCoy, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> McCoy, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

“Filipinization” policy in 1916 when the Philippine legislature cut pay for colonial officers and began to train Filipinos at the expanded Constabulary Academy at Baguio.<sup>14</sup> A significant milestone in the rise of Filipino officers was the appointment of General Rafael Crame as chief of constabulary. During his command, the constabulary regiment was transformed into an all-Filipino professional force.<sup>15</sup> Also discussed later in this paper is the entry of Filipino cadets into the US service academies.

During the 1920s, the American colonial regime started training Filipino officers for command mobilizing the US Army to conduct officer training programs at Manila’s leading colleges, which was the beginning of the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC).<sup>16</sup> At the University of the Philippines, for example, an active-duty US Army captain was retained as chairman of the Department of Military Science and Tactics.<sup>17</sup>

On March 1934, the US Congress passed the Tydings-McDuffie Act mandating a ten-year transition toward Philippine independence.<sup>18</sup> Later that year Manuel Quezon, expecting to preside over the newly created Philippine commonwealth, invited General Douglas MacArthur to become the principal military adviser.<sup>19</sup> By this time, Japan was expanding in China and the threat of an invasion was real if not inevitable. Faced with the critical question of Philippine national defense, General MacArthur proposed “a reserve of citizen conscripts, trained and commanded by a core of regulars, to be mobilized in the event of war.”<sup>20</sup>

Following his election as president of the Philippine commonwealth, Quezon made mobilization his top priority under the National Defense Act of

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>17</sup> McCoy, p. 21.

<sup>18</sup> Karnow, p. 437.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 270.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

1935.<sup>21</sup> General MacArthur and his staff officers, Dwight Eisenhower and James Ord, prepared the Swiss plan for the defense of the islands using an army of citizen-soldiers.<sup>22</sup> Due to budgetary constraints, training for conscripts was trimmed down to six months, military pay was reduced, and the purchase of new weapons was eliminated.<sup>23</sup> As military training was set in motion, the Philippine Army was faced with the dilemma of forming an officer corps not only because of the length of time it would take to educate an officer (four years) but also the lack of officers to train. Training conscripts, on the other hand, only required six months.

By necessity, the Philippine Army formed its officer corps from the few West Point graduates, veterans from the constabulary and Philippine Scouts, and a large number of college reservists.<sup>24</sup> Before the outbreak of war in the Pacific, the Philippine Army had 770 regular and reserve forces including the first graduates from PMA.<sup>25</sup> This might have been one of the main turning points in the evolution of military professionalism in the Philippine armed forces. McCoy makes a very interesting contrast between PMA graduates and those reserve officers from the University of the Philippines (UP).<sup>26</sup> On the one hand, the PMA graduates in that generation were indoctrinated into an ideal of military professionalism, one that submitted to civil supremacy. On the other hand, UP ROTC graduates who emerged from activist and nationalist sentiments, had values that sought to politicize the military, serving both nation and personal ambition. Notable UP reserve officer figures McCoy sites include key individuals in the martial law regime: President Ferdinand Marcos, his chief of staff Romeo

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<sup>21</sup> McCoy, p. 23.

<sup>22</sup> H. W. Brands, *Bound to Empire: The United States and the Philippines* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 167.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> McCoy, p. 24.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

Espino, Supreme Court Chief Justice Fred Ruiz Castro, and sugar czar Roberto S. Benedicto.<sup>27</sup>

During the war, the Philippine Army was integrated with the United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE).<sup>28</sup> The Philippine forces were comprised of 100,000 active forces in the Philippine Army plus 12,000 Philippine Scouts.<sup>29</sup> These forces, alongside their American protectors, fought Japanese invaders in Bataan, engaged in anti-Japanese guerrilla warfare, and participated in the battles for Philippine liberation.

## **2. Post-colonial Period**

The declaration of Philippine independence on July 4, 1946, although it marked the end of colonialism, did not end the country's dependence on the United States. After the war, the Philippines had three overriding issues: economy, US relations, and the *Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon* (Hukbalahap).<sup>30</sup> Once again, the country had to rely on American support to establish its armed forces. Washington's influence would become apparent as it decided AFP's mission to be that of internal defense and integrated the Philippines into the American global system, which guaranteed its strategic defense.<sup>31</sup> This not only denied the AFP its responsibility of external defense but also "planted seeds of an ideological crisis for Filipino officers."<sup>32</sup>

The US would also play its hand in influencing the rise of Ramon Magsaysay in the early 1950s. Under Quirino's regime, he became secretary of defense at the "insistence of the United States."<sup>33</sup> During this period, government corruption was already rampant while the military faced morale and

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>29</sup> H. W. Brands, p. 188.

<sup>30</sup> David Steinberg, *The Philippines: A Singular and a Plural Place* (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1990), p. 107.

<sup>31</sup> McCoy, pp. 26-27.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>33</sup> Steinberg, p. 109.

training problems and could not overcome the Hukbalahap insurgency.<sup>34</sup> Magsaysay, through his close ties to the Americans, revitalized the AFP, resolved the Hukbalahap insurgency, and restored fair congressional elections in 1951.<sup>35</sup> Magsaysay's impact on civil-military relations, while restoring the integrity of the AFP, also had a negative implication. Serving as both President and Secretary of Defense, he engaged the officer corps in civil administration thus injecting the element of political tension within the AFP.<sup>36</sup>

In the decade following Magsaysay's regime, the armed forces remained the same and was comprised of approximately 58,000 multiservice force.<sup>37</sup> McCoy describes the professionalism of the post-war officers leading the AFP as "indoctrinated into an ideal of civilian supremacy and generally avoided political entanglements ... an elite apart from the pervasive politics of their society."<sup>38</sup> He adds, however, that because of budget constraints and slow promotions, some officers resorted to corruption and political patronage.<sup>39</sup>

During the Marcos regime, the professionalism of the AFP suffered a major setback. In his effort to restore morale and rid the AFP of corruption, he instituted a drastic shakeup in the military command structure by removing key constabulary commanders and forcing over a dozen generals in the AFP to retire, replacing them with officers based on close personal ties.<sup>40</sup> As president, Marcos used his position with cunning ability to surround himself with loyalists creating what McCoy describes as a "parallel command," a force that would be used during his 1967 reelection campaign.<sup>41</sup> By doing this, he damaged the unity of the armed forces and factionalized the officer corps. Increasingly the

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<sup>34</sup> Steinberg, p. 109.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> McCoy, p. 28.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> McCoy, p. 28.

AFP became more politicized as officers once committed to upholding the supremacy of the civil authority and service to the entire society now served Marcos and his self-appointed civilian bureaucracy.

Meanwhile, US patronage continued as the Marcos regime maintained its strong connection to Washington thus allowing the continuous flow of military assistance given the strategic importance of Clark Air Base and Subic Bay.<sup>42</sup> In exchange for \$34 million in US assistance, Marcos provided a meager contingent of two thousand engineers in support of the Vietnam War.<sup>43</sup> During his regime, Marcos increased the budget of the AFP by nearly 50 percent and increased military strength to 63,000 by 1972.<sup>44</sup> This force included an entire generation of officers who would take part in the martial law declared later that year.

Under the pretext of a communist coup, Marcos used his emergency powers and declared martial law in September 1972.<sup>45</sup> Despite its muted disappointment, Washington continued to maintain good diplomatic relations with the regime, convinced that the presence of US bases in the Philippines would maintain stability in the region.<sup>46</sup> Portraying himself as a staunch American ally, Marcos received US support in the battle against insurgency and enjoyed an increase in military assistance after 1972.<sup>47</sup> The US later abandoned their support of the Marcos administration shifting their security goal to "the preservation of an anticommunist regime."<sup>48</sup>

One of the legacies of martial law is the politicization of the AFP, which came to threaten the regime itself.<sup>49</sup> During this period of dictatorship, the

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<sup>42</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 554.

<sup>43</sup> McCoy, p. 29.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Martin Wright, ed., *Revolution in the Philippines? A Keesing's Special Reports* (Chicago: St James Press, 1988), p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> John Bresnan, ed., *Crisis in the Philippines, the Marcos Era and Beyond* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). pp. 233-234.

<sup>47</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Practice*, p. 555.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 577.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 553.

Philippine officer corps was deprofessionalized as they enforced authoritarian rule arresting opponents and filling civilian posts. Toward the end of Marcos' regime, the condition of the officer corps was described as "split into factions and clandestine brotherhoods, fragmenting the armed forces and encouraging coup conspiracies."<sup>50</sup> It was under this politicized situation that the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) was formed and led by Colonel "Gringo" Honasan. This group of military officers rallied under the leadership of Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile to oust Marcos. Backed by the convergence of masses at Ephifanio delos Santos Avenue (EDSA), the military (except for the Marcos loyalist faction) intervened and shifted its support to Corazon Aquino. This uprising was later dubbed as the "People Power Revolution" or the "EDSA Revolution."

The unexpected and tumultuous rise of Corazon Aquino to power signaled the return of democracy and civilian control. This also meant reprofessionalizing the AFP and a whole generation of AFP officers who were part of the previous dictatorship. Her administration, however, was faced with the daunting task of rebuilding political order and controlling the powerful military establishment of the previous regime. Among her top priorities was to deal with the human rights violations during Marcos' rule, an argument later given by a RAM analyst as the ultimate reason of the coups against her because the Human Rights Commission focused only on the violations perpetrated by soldiers.<sup>51</sup> Other actions that alienated her from the military was the release of political prisoners, most of whom were leftists, and opening negotiations with the New People's Army (NPA)<sup>52</sup> – the group her armed forces were fighting against.

The Aquino regime was riddled with nine coup attempts, which complicated her attempt to consolidate power. In terms of military professionalism, the coups indicated divisions within the AFP manifested by the actions of RAM who were unwilling to submit to civilian authority. Even at the top

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<sup>50</sup> McCoy, p. 30.

<sup>51</sup> McCoy, p. 260.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 262.

level of the military hierarchy, the signs of factionalism were also apparent. However, her alliance with the faction under her Chief of Staff, General Ramos “assured her survival and his succession to the presidency.”<sup>53</sup> This alliance would also earn Ramos his appointment as Secretary of National Defense before running for the country’s highest office.

In the six years of her presidency and despite her challenges with the military establishment, Aquino implemented reforms to enhance military professionalism. She shifted her administration’s policy to a “total war against communist insurgents” while addressing some of the military’s concerns.<sup>54</sup> More significantly, she passed the Republic Act 6975 establishing the Department of Interior and Local Government and created the Philippine National Police (PNP) under civilian control.<sup>55</sup>

Backed by outgoing President Aquino, General Ramos emerged victorious over the hotly contested presidential elections in 1992. A West Point graduate, President Ramos was most instrumental in the initial efforts to modernize the AFP. The success of the modernization efforts would be a welcome change for the AFP, which was badly in need of new equipment. Partly shifting the role of the military, he emphasized its involvement in national development activities. He was also responsible for the amnesty program, which allowed certain AFP officers involved in the coup attempts to return to military service.<sup>56</sup>

During his presidency, Ramos also appointed a considerable number of retired military to civilian posts.<sup>57</sup> This development, in its own way, was a return to the politicization of the military or militarization of the civilian sector. The fact that these retired generals were so identified still indicated the corporateness of the military as distinct from civilian society. Because they had not shed off their

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>54</sup> Raymund Jose G. Quilop, *Civil-Military Relations: An Overview of the Philippine Experience* <[www.apan-info.net/partners/uploads/AFP-OSS-CMR%20for%20Kasarinlan.pdf](http://www.apan-info.net/partners/uploads/AFP-OSS-CMR%20for%20Kasarinlan.pdf)> (1 March 2003).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Quilop.

<sup>57</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Coercion and Governance*, p. 183.

military mindset, the military was perceived as playing a hand in politics. At a time when Philippine politics was attempting to strengthen civilian control of the military, this action appeared to be a departure from military professionalism. Moreover the role of the military in national development activities, as in the case of other countries in Southeast Asia, Thailand and Indonesia, presented a renewed concern about further politicization of the military.

The new administration under President Estrada saw another manifestation of civilian patronage over a certain military faction. Allying himself with former RAM leaders, Senators Enrile and Honasan, Estrada established his own network of support in the AFP. A key appointment in his administration was one of Honasan's PMA classmates, Chief of Police Panfilo Lacson, who in turn made his own powerful network in the PNP by promoting three PMA classmates to regional commands.<sup>58</sup>

Estrada's administration, although short-lived, left some legacies, which had a tremendous impact on the professionalism of the AFP. First among these was his administration's moratorium on the much-touted modernization program approved during the Ramos regime.<sup>59</sup> This delay has added another setback to the already poorly equipped armed forces. Secondly, it was under Estrada's regime that the controversial Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) was passed.<sup>60</sup> This facilitated continued military cooperation between the US and the Philippines and presented potential economic benefits to the local economies where joint military exercises were held. Thirdly, Estrada's impeachment because of graft and corruption and the subsequent withdrawal of AFP's support showed the military leadership's unwillingness to allow the chief executive to usurp his position for political or economic gain.

Similar to the first People Power Revolution at EDSA that propelled Aquino to power, Chief of Staff General Angelo Reyes spearheaded the military intervention by shifting his support to Macapagal-Arroyo. The January 2001

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<sup>58</sup> McCoy, p. 335.

<sup>59</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Coercion and Governance*, p. 184.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 185.

uprising, referred to as “People Power II” or “EDSA DOS” was once again marked by the convergence of the masses at the same location as in 1986. This time, the civilian uprising and military intervention was caused by pro-Estrada senators who voted not to open an envelope believed to contain evidence of corruption and suspended impeachment proceedings.

The new Macapagal-Arroyo government did not miss a beat in the “total war” policy against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) adopted during the Estrada administration.<sup>61</sup> She was also placed at the forefront on the war on terrorism when the US extended its global campaign in the Philippines after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Her unwavering support of the US-led efforts against terrorism and the war in Iraq were instrumental for designating the Philippines as a “Major Non-Nato Ally.”

As the new Commander-in-Chief, Macapagal-Arroyo appointed General Angelo Reyes as Secretary of National Defense, a move seen by many as a reward for Reyes’ role in her rise to the presidency. Within the two-and-a-half years in office, she appointed a succession of four generals (Cimatu, Defensor, Santiago, and Abaya) to fill the AFP Chief of Staff position. Serving less than a year, these revolving-door appointments to the highest military position are highly suspect as patronage as these appointments did not provide the continuity the AFP needed at a time when the country was confronted with escalating internal security challenges, particularly the MILF and Abu Sayyaf in Mindanao and the post-9/11 global war on terrorism.

The failed mutiny perpetrated by a group of junior officers presented the Macapagal-Arroyo regime with the greatest civil-military relations dilemma. Highlighting corruption at the highest levels of government including the AFP, the rebellious officers barricaded themselves in the Oakwood Premier Hotel in the country’s economic district of Makati and presented their grievances. They challenged the legitimacy of the government and demanded the resignation of Macapagal-Arroyo, Defense Secretary Reyes, and Military Intelligence Chief Brigadier General Victor Corpus. Unlike the successful military interventions of

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<sup>61</sup> Quilop.

1986 and 2001, this coup mutiny did not have support from top leaders of the AFP nor from the mass population. The mutinous officers surrendered peacefully and returned to their barracks pending results of further hearings and investigations.

Following the end of the standoff, Brigadier General Corpus resigned as Chief of Military Intelligence to end the “restiveness” of the AFP.<sup>62</sup> A month later, Defense Secretary Reyes also resigned amidst political pressure. Commenting on the state of civil-military affairs and alluding to a larger political conspiracy and power grabs in the country, he said, “What is more disturbing is that, despite the long tradition of democratic practice in the country and a vocal citizenry steeped in democratic ideals, some mainstream politicos in the Philippines now seem to actually want the military involved in what are essentially political contests.”<sup>63</sup>

The Philippine model of professionalism can largely be attributed to the role the US played in influencing the formation and the development of the AFP. Over the past century, the US has both positively and negatively affected the professionalism of the Philippine officer corps. The “special relationship” of the two countries has benefited the Philippines significantly through American benevolence. During the colonial period, the US practically created, trained, and equipped the AFP officer cadre. The US also filled the role for the external defense of the country. Following its independence, the Philippines remained dependent on security matters as the US continued to serve as a security blanket for both internal and external defense until the withdrawal of US bases.

The US-Philippines relations, however, also undermined military professionalism at least in a couple of respects. Because of the same American benevolence, the AFP had difficulty establishing itself as a strong and autonomous institution. The AFP’s overdependence on the US for its roles in internal and external defense has created a safety net but also created a security

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<sup>62</sup> INQ7 Network News, “Military Intelligence Chief Resigns; President Accepts,” 30 July 2003, <[http://www.inq7.net/brk/2003/jul/30/text/brkpol\\_9-1.htm](http://www.inq7.net/brk/2003/jul/30/text/brkpol_9-1.htm)> (1 August 2003).

<sup>63</sup> Angelo Reyes, “Military Intervention and its Effect on Democracy in a Developing Economy Like the Philippines,” Speech at the Asia Pacific Research Center, Stanford University, 9 October 2003.

dilemma when the US bases were withdrawn. Secondly, politicization in the military increased because of the pattern of political patronage. This was especially true during the Quirino, Magsaysay and Marcos regimes as discussed above. Although politicization is inevitable because of the AFP's expanding role in economic development, the colonial legacy of political patronage tend to influence political alliances and factionalize the military establishment.

### III. AREAS OF US INFLUENCE

This chapter discusses four areas in which the US has, in one way or another, influenced military professionalism. As the premier military institution, PMA is the first step in the process of professional development for the majority of future officers in the AFP. This research assesses PMA's curriculum in military professionalism and determines the extent of US influence. A second area of influence discussed in this chapter is the attendance of Philippine cadets at US service academies and their role in shaping military professionalism. Thirdly, the participation of AFP officers in various US military schools through the IMET program is also discussed to evaluate the success of the program and the extent to which returning graduates are able to exert influence in their respective organizations. Lastly, this chapter examines mil-to-mil exercises and determines how these US-Philippines bilateral activities enhance military professionalism.

#### A. THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY ACADEMY

General Delos Santos, a former Commanding General of the Philippine Army, commented that "PMA has been patterned after West Point and we are very proud in saying that PMA is the West Point in Asia ... if you look at PMA as West Point, PMA is more West Point than West Point itself."<sup>64</sup> Indeed, the basic officer training at PMA has a good measure of US influence. As the premier institution for military training in the Philippines, PMA applies US training principles and practices. Under the National Defense Act on 21 December 1936 (or Commonwealth Act No. 1), the PMA was formally established, conferring a Bachelor of Science degree to its graduates as a four-year institution.<sup>65</sup> Beyond the West Point-style cadet uniforms, PMA serves as the breeding ground for military professionalism. McCoy points out that General MacArthur, having been

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<sup>64</sup> Jimmy Delos Santos, comments on "Proceedings of the 1<sup>st</sup> PMA Stakeholders' Conference," Camp Gen Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City, 22 Oct 02.

<sup>65</sup> PMA History, <http://www.pma.ph/about/history.htm> (16 March 2003).

a former Superintendent at the US Military Academy, transported the West Point system into the newly established institution.<sup>66</sup> Like West Point, PMA afforded the opportunity to integrate cadets from various social and regional backgrounds and then socialized these future officers “in new values that would make them servants of state power.”<sup>67</sup> McCoy adds that the curriculum and culture at West Point “would also prove effective at PMA.”<sup>68</sup>

The outbreak of the Second World War interrupted training at PMA but reopened on 5 May 1947, restoring the US pattern prior to the war.<sup>69</sup> The curriculum combines engineering, behavioral sciences, and humanities courses. The historical background of PMA notes that the curriculum remained fundamentally the same from 1935 through 1960s.<sup>70</sup> In the 1970s, more technical courses were added and then shifted to socio-humanistic-oriented courses. In the 1990s, PMA’s curriculum was restructured from a general education focus to a tri-service concept to preempt the establishment of separate service academies.<sup>71</sup> The tri-service curriculum conferred Bachelor of Science degrees with majors in Management for the Army, Aeronautical Science for the Air Force, and Naval Systems Engineering for the Navy. Later, academic majors were made independent of the tri-service curriculum giving cadets a choice in three academic majors: Management, Computer Science, and General Engineering.<sup>72</sup>

Another curriculum review was conducted in 1998, which led to the formulation of a new curriculum with a generalist perspective. This curriculum, however, presented an academic overload on cadets (175 units of coursework compared to 156 units at US service academies) and lacked focus by “teaching

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<sup>66</sup> McCoy, p. 38.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> PMA History, <<http://www.pma.ph/about/history.htm>> (16 March 2003)

<sup>70</sup> PMA Curriculum, <<http://www.pma.ph/curriculum/Curriculum.htm>> (3 March 2003)

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Final Report on the New (Proposed) Curriculum of the Philippine Military Academy, 9 Jun 02, p. 4.

little of everything.”<sup>73</sup> In June 2003, a revised curriculum was unveiled based on the 1998 curriculum but reduced the academic overload from 175 to 146 units. The new academic program now offers degrees in Management, Information Systems, and General Engineering, allowing cadets to focus on a chosen field of study. The following are the major features of the 2003 curriculum:<sup>74</sup>

1. Overarching Goal: To produce 21<sup>st</sup> century leaders of our Armed Forces who are aware of the national and world security issues and who can anticipate and perform their roles effectively and are adaptable to the social, economic, political, and technological challenges of the environment.
2. Core Program: The core program consist of 29 subjects that contain elements of a broad, general education designed to give cadets a fundamental knowledge in the arts and sciences. The program establishes the foundation for major area electives that will allow the cadets to major in Management, General Engineering, or Information Systems. It also provides the necessary base of knowledge required by the Major Service Professional Courses.
3. Professional Course Program: Professional courses that train cadets to become functional and effective junior officers in their selected major service. All undergo the Basic Military Training which offers basic soldiery skills. Based on ones selected major service, each cadet completes service specific curriculum.
4. The Major Area Elective (MAE) Program: The three academic majors offered initially are Management, Information Systems, and General Engineering.
5. Leadership Development Program: Focusing on the development of character and military skills, this program aims to develop the character, professionalism, and aptitude of each cadet as required of a regular officer in the AFP. This program also provides leadership training and develops basic qualities and attributes of leadership, progressing from a small unit to company level leadership.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 7-8.

6. Physical Education Program: The physical education curriculum consists of eight subjects aimed at developing the physical condition of cadets to its maximum level while developing confidence, positive attitude, sportsmanship, esprit-de-corps, teamwork, and self-discipline.

In addition to the contributions in the curriculum history of PMA, the US also has exerted influence in other areas. According to General Adan, the 49<sup>th</sup> Superintendent of PMA, US exchange professors served in the PMA faculty from the 1960s through the 1980s.<sup>75</sup> Training equipment was also provided as part of the US assistance program. These programs ceased after the withdrawal of US bases in the Philippines. Also worth noting is the number of US-trained officers currently serving in the Academy's corps of professors and staff. Among 154 officers, 15 have attended US training, including a 1983 graduate of the US Coast Guard Academy who is serving as Assistant Superintendent for Educational Plans and Programs.

A milestone in 1993, under the Republic Act 7192, PMA admitted its first female cadets.<sup>76</sup> Today the academy continues its fine tradition of producing professional men and women ready to fulfill their role as guardians of the people and the state, "trained in a revered institution that molds and develops future leaders and vanguards of national posterity and freedom."<sup>77</sup> In President Arroyo's speech at the Academy, she reminded the Class of 2002 of the very essence of professionalism that "The Armed Forces is a constitutional instrument. It defends democracy and protects human rights. It holds unconditional allegiance to civilian authority and to the unity of command. It adheres to a code of discipline and absolute fealty to the constitution."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Edilberto P. Adan, Taped interview by author, Camp Gen Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City, 29 Oct 03.

<sup>76</sup> PMA History, <<http://www.pma.ph/about/history.htm>> (16 March 2003)

<sup>77</sup> PMA Curriculum, <<http://www.pma.ph/curriculum/Curriculum.htm>> (16 March 2003)

<sup>78</sup> Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Speech during the Philippine Military Academy "Banyuhay" Class of 2002 Commencement Exercises, 24 March 2002.

## B. US SERVICE ACADEMIES

The US influence on military professionalism may also be attributed to the attendance of Filipinos at the US service academies. In 1908, the US Congress authorized the admission of Filipinos at West Point although their commissions were restricted to service in the Philippine Scouts.<sup>79</sup> The US Army maintained their reservations about Filipino officership until the natives began graduating at West Point. The first Filipino cadet, Vicente P. Lim, gained such significance as he graduated with an academic rank of 77 among 107.<sup>80</sup> He later progressed through the ranks to become a general officer and paved the way for younger Filipino officers.

By the end of the 1930s, there were a total of 26 Filipino West Point graduates some of whom served as the core cadre at PMA in 1936.<sup>81</sup> It is difficult to measure the impact these graduates had upon returning to serve in the AFP. McCoy notes, however, that by opening the Constabulary Academy and sending Filipinos to West Point “the American regime fostered an alternative form of military professionalism.”<sup>82</sup> The Philippines continues to send cadets to USMA and other US service academies but further research is necessary to obtain a better understanding of its impact on the professionalism of the AFP. Interviews with Filipino officers seem to indicate that today a growing trend of Filipino graduates of US service academies leave the AFP after their initial service commitment to pursue civilian careers.

A significant highlight of this “West Point Connection” is General Fidel V. Ramos. A career army officer and a West Point alumnus, he served as the Chief of the Philippine Constabulary during the Marcos regime. He later became AFP Deputy Chief of Staff in 1981 and Chief of Staff in 1986. He was identified as one of the close associates of President Marcos but switched sides aligning

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<sup>79</sup> McCoy, p. 20.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

himself to Corazon Aquino and the “People Power” movement.<sup>83</sup> During the Aquino administration, he served as defense secretary, continuing to support her strongly through several coup attempts. A known believer in civilian supremacy over the military, General Ramos was instrumental in preventing the coup attempts of rightist military rebels as he placed his loyalty behind the Aquino regime.<sup>84</sup> In 1992, General Ramos was elected as President of the Philippines.

The recent appointment of Lieutenant General Narciso Abaya (USMA '71) to head the AFP is another significant highlight for Filipino West Point graduates. General Abaya's military record reflects an impeccable record on his professionalism as an officer and confirms the confidence that the President has placed on him. His past and future contributions in shaping military professionalism in the AFP may not be tangible but certainly has an imprint of US influence through the West Point connection.

### **C. INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

The US, under the auspices of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), conducts the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. As part of the US security assistance program, IMET provides professional military education to students from allied and friendly nations such as the Philippines exposing them to US professional organizations, procedures, and the manner in which military organizations function under civilian control.<sup>85</sup> This program is particularly important for the Philippines because it allows AFP officers access to US courses that are not available elsewhere and unaffordable

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<sup>83</sup> Martin Wright, p. 53.

<sup>84</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Practice*, p. 562.

<sup>85</sup> Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 2001, *Military Assistance*, 15 March 2000, <[http://www.state.gov/www/budget/fy2001/fn150/forops\\_full/150fy01\\_fo\\_military-asst.html](http://www.state.gov/www/budget/fy2001/fn150/forops_full/150fy01_fo_military-asst.html)> (28 February 2003).

given budgetary constraints. Between fiscal years 1992 through 2001, the US has provided over \$1.9 million in IMET funding for the Philippines.<sup>86</sup>

Measuring the effectiveness of IMET in the Philippines is one way of gauging US influence in military professionalism. In evaluating the success of IMET, the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requires the State Department and the Department of Defense to demonstrate the achievement of the program.<sup>87</sup> In 1994, the National Defense Research Institute published case studies of US IMET training on Thailand and the Philippines to evaluate its role in internal defense and development. The following US objectives were identified for the Philippines:<sup>88</sup>

- Retain contact and influence with the Philippine military in the absence of the day-to-day relationship that existed prior to the base withdrawal;
- Uphold its R.P.-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty responsibilities;
- Ensure that the Philippine military is competent and compatible with the United States' military;
- Maximize joint training and interoperability as outlined in the East Asian Strategy Initiative; and
- Continue to support democracy and human rights in the Philippines.

In this case study, there were three multipliers used as measures of influence: (1) US-trained officers train their counterparts upon their return from the United States; (2) The US trains a disproportionate number of leaders; and, (3) The training conducted by the Philippine military relies heavily on US doctrine, training manuals, and equipment.<sup>89</sup> The following were key concluding

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<sup>86</sup> DSCA Facts Book, Deputy of Financial Management Comptroller, 30 September 2001, <[http://www.dscac.mil/programs/Comptroller/2001\\_FACTS/FACTS%202001%20Students.xls](http://www.dscac.mil/programs/Comptroller/2001_FACTS/FACTS%202001%20Students.xls)> (10 Feb 2003).

<sup>87</sup> Todd Calhoun, Evaluating Security Assistance Programs: Performance Evaluation and The Expanded International Military Education and Training (E-IMET) Program (Master's Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1998), p. v.

<sup>88</sup> Taw, p. 40.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

observations, which indicate the need for both government and military exposure to the theoretical and practical issues of IMET:<sup>90</sup>

- The government is still riddled with corruption, and democratic institutions continue to be misused.
- The Philippine military has lost its traditional respect for civilian authority, continues to perpetrate brutal human-rights abuses, and has failed to eliminate the two insurgencies that have plagued the country for more than 20 years.
- The Philippines' internal and external defense efforts are threatened by the country's persistent lack of financial resources and would benefit from improved defense resource management.

It has been over a decade since these observations were made, but, even with the lack of another independent study, empirical evidence will show that these same observations still persist. However, the US remains committed to support the IMET program as the cornerstone of Pacific Command's Theater Security Cooperation Program. Admiral Dennis Blair argued that it is "the best means for promoting professionalism within foreign armed forces and exposing foreign armed forces to the principle of a military responsive to civilian control."<sup>91</sup>

#### **D. US-PHILIPPINES MIL-TO-MIL EXERCISES**

The presence of US bases in the past provided a security blanket for the Philippines and gave the US a de facto role for the country's external defense. The end of the Cold War and the failure of the Philippine government to renew the Military Bases Agreement (MBA) have changed the nature of the AFP's mission and for the first time has gained the primary responsibility for external defense.<sup>92</sup> As a result, the Philippines is forced to rely on the existing bilateral security and defense arrangements with the US to enhance its defense posture and capability. These arrangements include the Mutual Defense Treaty in 1951,

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Dennis Blair, *Statement Before the Senate Armed Services Committee on US Pacific Command Posture*, 5 March 2002, <<http://131.84.1.218/speeches/sst2002/020305sas.pdf>> (14 March 2003).

<sup>92</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Coercion and Governance*, p. 185.

the Military Assistance Agreement of 1947, the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement of 1953, and the Visiting Forces Agreement ratified in 1999.<sup>93</sup>

These agreements signify the increasing reliance on Mil-to-Mil relations between the two countries in both operational and functional levels.<sup>94</sup> The termination of the MBA left the MDT as the sole foundation of US-Philippines security relationship. As part of this relationship, both countries conduct joint military exercises to meet their security objectives. Agustin identifies the benefits for the Philippines through these exercises.<sup>95</sup> First, they enable the AFP to bridge the military technological gap between the two forces as it lacks not only the modern equipment but also the training to use this equipment. As a force multiplier, these exercises enhance the skills and capability of AFP members. Furthermore, the joint nature of these activities provides a confidence-building atmosphere and facilitates the cross-flow of information. Lastly, they sustain defense and security relations both in the region and at the bilateral level.

Balikatan (meaning Shoulder-to-Shoulder) Exercise is one of the higher profile exercises conducted in the Philippines especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. This training exercise is a joint and combined multilateral training exercise conducted in the Philippines with military counterparts from both the US and the AFP. Besides improving military interoperability among military units and their service members, Balikatan also enhances positive military relations between the two countries.

Talon Vision is another Mil-to-Mil exercise that the US and the Philippines conduct periodically. During the November 2003 exercise, 400 US Marines and 900 AFP soldiers participated in this joint training aimed to boost the capabilities of Philippine forces battling communist and Muslim separatist guerrillas. As part of the training, troops from both countries shared tactics, techniques, and

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<sup>93</sup> Carlos Agustin, Military Exercises in the Context of Philippine Security Requirements, <<http://www.ndcp.edu.ph/ppapers/BALIKATAN%20PAPER%20FOR%20CLA%202.htm>> (3 February 2003)

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

procedures including the operation of US and Philippine military aircraft and equipment.<sup>96</sup>

The table below lists other bilateral Mil-to-Mil exercises between the Philippine and US Armed Forces:

Name of Exercise	Nature of Exercise	Number of Exercises
BALIKATAN Exercise	Tri-service joint combined exercise	From 1991 to 1996
CARAT (Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training)	Amphibious exercise between US Pacific Fleet and Philippine Navy	One in 1996 Less amphibious exercise component in 1998
MARSURVEX (Maritime Surveillance Exercise)	An air and naval exercise dealing on maritime patrol, surface detection/tracking and reporting	Ten from 1996 to date
PALAH (Pang-alon, Lupa at Himpapawid)	A navy special operations exercise	Eight from 1993 to date
BALANCE PISTON	A ground operations exercise dealing on special operations in situations other than war	Ten from 1993 to date
FLASH PISTON	A navy-to-navy exercise similar to PALAH	One in 1997
SALVEX (Ship Salvage Exercise)	A navy-to-navy exercise	One in 1993
PASSEX (Passing Exercise)	A navy-to-navy exercise with limited air force participation	Opportunity driven
EODX (Explosive, Ordnance, Demolition Exercise)	A Specialized interoperability training between the demolition and ordnance experts of Philippine and US Armed Forces	Five since 1994
TEAK PISTON	An Air Force-to-Air Force Exercise	

*Source: International Affairs Division, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, AFP*

Figure 1. List of RP-US Mil-to-Mil Exercises

The benefits that the Philippines receive through these exercises have a direct impact not only in developing the expertise of the AFP but also in fulfilling their responsibility in external and internal defense. However, the difficulties encountered to finalize the terms of the scheduled 2003 Balikatan Exercise shows how important it is for the two countries to work together to ensure that the rules of operation fall within the purview of Philippine laws and other legal parameters as provided for in the MDT and the VFA.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Inquirer News Service, "US-RP Military Exercises Start Amid Tight Security," [http://www.inq7.net/brk/2003/nov/03/text/brkpol\\_10-1-p.htm](http://www.inq7.net/brk/2003/nov/03/text/brkpol_10-1-p.htm) (3 Nov 03).

<sup>97</sup> Agustin.

By and large, the US has left a positive influence in military professionalism in the AFP in at least four areas. Philippine Military Academy as originally envisioned by General MacArthur continues to produce professional leaders in the AFP. The PMA leadership has made necessary adjustments through deliberate planning and curriculum reviews to create a program that meets the requirements of the three major services in the AFP. Service academies in the US have produced graduates who became key leaders in the history of the Philippines including General Fidel V. Ramos who served as Chief of Staff of the AFP, Secretary of National Defense, then later President of the Philippines. Additional research tracing the careers Filipino graduates at US service academies may present a better picture on this area of US influence. Training through IMET continues to be an essential element in shaping the professionalism of Philippine officers. Even though the 1994 IMET case study on the Philippines reflects disturbing observations, consideration must be given to the fact that a sizeable portion of officers who served during the Marcos regime still remain in the AFP, some of whom may be in leadership positions. Critical to the maintenance of expertise in the AFP are the Mil-to-Mil exercises participated in by both countries. Exercise planners, however, must continue to work more closely to ensure the rules of engagement fall within the purview of Philippine laws and other legal parameters as provided for in the MDT and the VFA.

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#### **IV. THE CHANGING SECURITY ENVIRONMENT AND OTHER CHALLENGES CONFRONTING THE AFP**

Critical to the AFP's ability to fulfill its roles and missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is how it transforms itself while maintaining viability. This chapter examines two issues affecting military professionalism. First, the changing security environment and the war on terrorism have forced the AFP to reevaluate its current capabilities and work more closely with the US in the global war on terrorism. Secondly, and in light of this new security environment, the AFP is confronted with the concepts of the *postmodern* military and the *Revolution in Military Affairs* (RMA). These are relevant issues in terms of US influence on military professionalism in the AFP because they have reshaped the special relationship between the two countries.

The end of the Cold War and the withdrawal of US bases changed the security environment in the Philippines. Following the 11 September 2001 attacks in New York and Washington DC, the Philippines joined the US-led global war against terrorism. This new focus on terrorism also changed the security environment and has altered the nature of US-Philippines relations. President Arroyo staunchly supported the campaign against terrorists when the two countries began cooperating to hunt down remnants of Abu Sayyaf which kidnapped foreign tourists and missionaries including several Americans. With the inclusion of the New People's Army (NPA) in the US' list of terrorist organizations and its continuing efforts to pursue trace transnational terrorists within the region, the US and the Philippines have embarked on a new cooperative security strategy. This chapter will explore the implications of terrorism on US-Philippines relations and its impact on military professionalism.

The concept of the *postmodern* military is emerging in the United States and other Western democracies. In the post-Cold War era and the reduction of external threat, the military establishment is changing in character and shifting away from the traditional military purpose of fighting wars. Can the AFP fit the mold of the *postmodern* military and what are its implications in the current

mission and force structure? In 1999, a related concept called the *Revolution in Military Affairs* was advanced by then Secretary of Defense Cohen. This concept encourages the professional military to seize “the opportunity to transform its strategy, military doctrine, training, education organization, equipment, operations and tactics to achieve decisive military results in fundamentally new ways.”<sup>98</sup> The advent of information technologies has drastically changed the way the US and other modern armed forces fight wars while the AFP continues to struggle in its modernization efforts. This chapter also assesses the extent to which the AFP is addressing this issue and how it affects military professionalism.

#### **A. THE CHANGING SECURITY ENVIRONMENT AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM**

The end of the Cold War and the withdrawal of the US bases from the country have altered the security environment for the AFP.<sup>99</sup> The terrorist attacks on US soil in September 2001 and the ensuing global war on terrorism has further altered this security environment. This new security environment presents new challenges for the AFP to meet its requirements in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In 1995, the Ramos administration approved the 331 billion peso AFP modernization program, which emphasized external defense; however, the resurgence of internal threats has prompted the AFP to revise its priorities.<sup>100</sup> The Arroyo administration’s 14 Pillars of Policy and Action against Terrorism also signaled a new focus on the role of the AFP to address anti- and counter-terrorism measures.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Jan Breemer, *War as We Knew It: The Real Revolution in Military Affairs/Understanding Paralysis in Military Operations* (Occasional Paper No. 19, Center for Strategy and Technology, Air War College, December 2000), p. 3.

<sup>99</sup> Clarita C. Carlos, *Revolution in Military Affairs: Philippine Perspectives* (Paper presented at the Asia Pacific Governance 2000 Conference, Brisbane, Australia, 27-28 April 2000), p. 5.

<sup>100</sup> US State Department, *Annual Report on Military Expenditures*, 1999 <[http://www.state.gov/www/global/arms/99\\_amiex3.html](http://www.state.gov/www/global/arms/99_amiex3.html)> (10 Jun 03).

<sup>101</sup> Francisco Tolin, *The Response of the Philippine Government and the Role of the AFP in Addressing Terrorism* <[http://www.ndcp.edu.ph/articles/template.htm?a\\_no=3](http://www.ndcp.edu.ph/articles/template.htm?a_no=3)> (15 June 2003).

While the end of the Cold War has diminished external threats to the country, the Philippines is forced to rely on the existing bilateral security and defense arrangements with the US to enhance its defense posture and capability. These arrangements include the Mutual Defense Treaty in 1951, the Military Assistance Agreement of 1947, the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement of 1953, and the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) ratified in 1999.<sup>102</sup> The VFA is a major step in “restabilizing a good military-to-military relationship” and the resumption of joint exercises between the two countries.<sup>103</sup>

The presence of US bases in the past not only provided a security blanket for the Philippines but also supported the AFP in its war against insurgencies.<sup>104</sup> The failure of the Philippine government to renew the Military Bases Agreement (MBA) has changed the nature of the AFP’s mission and for the first time has the primary responsibility for external defense.<sup>105</sup> The withdrawal of US bases also forfeited many direct and indirect benefits the AFP received in terms of operational, logistics and training support. This decision also cost the Philippine government dearly as resources for the procurement of much needed military equipment virtually disappeared.<sup>106</sup> The seriousness of the AFP’s external defense capability came to light in February 1995 when a Chinese military buildup was discovered on one of the islands in the disputed Spratlys.<sup>107</sup> This is still an unresolved issue and is considered as an impingement on the Philippines’ territorial integrity and its exclusive economic zone.<sup>108</sup> Another element to the

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<sup>102</sup> Carlos Agustin, Military Exercises in the Context of Philippine Security Requirements, <<http://www.ndcp.edu.ph/ppapers/BALIKATAN%20PAPER%20FOR%20CLA%202.htm>> (3 February 2003)

<sup>103</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Coercion and Governance*, p. 185

<sup>104</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Practice*, p. 567.

<sup>105</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *op cit.*

<sup>106</sup> Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment – Southeast Asia, Philippines, 27 May 2003 <<http://www4.janes.com/search97/>> (15 June 2003)

<sup>107</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 568.

<sup>108</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Practice*, p. 568.

“China threat” perception is the passage “China’s Law of the Sea” in 1992 which reasserts its “claim of sovereignty over the entire South China Sea.”<sup>109</sup>

There are three main sources of domestic terrorists confronting the AFP, some of whom have links with international terrorist organizations: the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a Muslim separatist group; the New People’s Army (NPA), a Maoist-inspired communist group; and the Abu Sayyaf, a small group of Muslim separatists backed by al-Qaeda.<sup>110</sup> McDonald notes, “It is terrorist infiltration and subversion that pose the primary security threats to the Philippines, not an invasion from without.”<sup>111</sup>

Terrorism has altered both the role of the AFP and the nature of US-Philippines relations. The Philippines has had its share of domestic and international terrorism in the past, but none has had a more magnified impact than those of 11 September. The AFP is mandated as the lead agency for terrorism as internal security threats, which, subject to national government approval, warrants the deployment of military force.<sup>112</sup> With this role, the AFP has established solid plans in its campaign against terrorism but recognizes the need to improve its doctrines and operations to handle the threat effectively.<sup>113</sup>

More significantly, the threat of transnational terrorism and the resulting global campaign led by the US reshaped the relationship between the two countries. The initial response in the Philippines was focused on the small Abu Sayyaf terrorist group with US Special Forces performing a limited role to “advise and assist.”<sup>114</sup> In September 2002, President George W. Bush recognized the importance of America’s alliances in Asia in the war against terrorism and

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Francisco Tolin, *The Response of the Philippine Government and the Role of AFP in Addressing Terrorism* <[http://www.ndcp.edu.ph/articles/template.htm?a\\_no=3](http://www.ndcp.edu.ph/articles/template.htm?a_no=3)> (15 June 2003).

<sup>111</sup> Douglas Macdonald, *The Philippines: Prospects for Intelligence Service Reforms in the Intelligence and Security Services* (paper presented at the Lessons for New Democracies: Reforming Intelligence and Security Services Conference, Arlington, CA, 8 May 2003), p. 4.

<sup>112</sup> Francisco Tolin.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Gaye Christoffersen, “The War on Terrorism in Southeast Asia: Searching for Partners, Delimiting Targets,” *Strategic Insight*, Center for Contemporary Conflict (March 2002).

highlighted that they “not only underpin regional peace and stability, but are flexible and ready to deal with new challenges.” He also indicated a “deepened cooperation on counter-terrorism with our alliance partners” particularly in Thailand and the Philippines.<sup>115</sup>

On 12 October 2001, President Arroyo issued her “14 Pillars in Combating Terrorism,” designed to strengthen internal counter-terrorism efforts. This strategy highlights the delineation of responsibilities, modernization of forces, anticipation and preparation of future attacks, enlisting the cooperation of other sectors in society, and addressing the varied underpinnings of terrorism.<sup>116</sup> Taking a more holistic approach, the government also emphasized a two-pronged strategy by “waging war on terrorism as it wages war on poverty,” a policy that prioritizes economic recovery.<sup>117</sup>

Related to President Arroyo’s May 2003 visit to the US, the United States has committed a “minimum” of \$356 million in security-related assistance.<sup>118</sup> This is a tremendous boost to the financially-constrained AFP not only in its counter-terrorists operations but also for critically needed equipment, training, and civic action programs. This also dwarfs the \$3.4 million of total military assistance from the US in 2001.<sup>119</sup> The package, which will provide funds to train and equip Philippine forces in its fight against terrorism includes:

- *Counterterrorism Equipment and Training:* \$30 million in new grant aid for equipment and training of Armed Forces of the Philippines targeted at capabilities for countering terrorist groups within Philippines.
- *Development Assistance to Conflict Areas:* \$30 million in new bilateral development assistance for Mindanao and support for the peace process with the MILF, as appropriate.

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<sup>115</sup> The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002, p. 26.

<sup>116</sup> Francisco Tolin, *op cit.*

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> Philippine Daily Inquirer, US Pouring Money, Guns into Mindanao, 27 May 2003  
<[http://www.inq7.net/nat/2003/may/28/nat\\_1-1.htm](http://www.inq7.net/nat/2003/may/28/nat_1-1.htm)> (27 May 2003)

<sup>119</sup> US Agency for International Development, US Overseas Loans & Grants Online, 2001  
<<http://quesdb.cdie.org/gbk/index.html>> (18 June 2003)

- *Establishment of Combat Engineering Unit*: \$25 million in new grant assistance to train and to equip a combat engineering unit and provide other military needs in the war on terror. The engineering unit will be able to do civic action and humanitarian projects in conflict zones.
- *U.S. Military Support to Philippine Counterterrorism Operations*: Agreement to provide U.S. military support to Armed Forces of the Philippines-led operations against the Abu Sayyaf Group.
- *Support to Philippine Military Mobility*: 20 UH-1H helicopters, as they become available and funding for refurbishment and transport is secured; an additional 10 UH-1H helicopters to be provided to ensure sufficient spare parts.
- *Comprehensive Security Review*: Launching of a comprehensive review of Philippine security needs and how the United States can best support Philippine military modernization and reform.
- *U.S. Defense Goods and Services*: Up to \$10 million in Presidential Drawdown Authority for equipment, spare parts and maintenance.<sup>120</sup>

The war on terrorism and the resulting deepened cooperation between the US and the Philippines has benefited the AFP in a variety of ways. First, the enormous amount of security and military assistance it received from the US enabled the armed forces to upgrade a significant portion of its obsolete equipment – a result that the modernization program was unable to deliver. Second, the AFP received valuable training through the joint military exercises that otherwise would not have been available. Thirdly, the increase in military assistance enhanced the AFP's capability to conduct civic action and humanitarian projects and will enhance civil-military relations in many impoverished areas. Collectively these benefits offer an enormous boost to the effectiveness of the armed forces, along with increased morale among military personnel and the heightened public image of the military. More significantly, the designation of the Philippines as a Major Non-NATO Ally will allow the "U.S. and

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<sup>120</sup> US Department of State, Fact Sheet: *U.S. to Provide Anti-Terrorism Aid to Philippines*, 19 May 2003 <<http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/nato/03051906.htm>> (15 June 2003)

Philippines to work together on military research and development and give Philippines greater access to American defense equipment and supplies.”<sup>121</sup>

## **B. THE POSTMODERN MILITARY AND THE REVOLUTION IN MILITARY AFFAIRS**

The altered security environment that confronts the AFP brings into question the concept of the postmodern military. With the diminished threat of external aggression at the end of the Cold War, the character of the AFP may no longer be so distinctive from that of the larger Philippine society. Moskos suggests five organizational changes that characterize the postmodern military:

- Increasing structural and cultural interpenetrability of civilian and military spheres
- Reducing the differences within the armed forces (branch, rank, roles)
- Shifting military role from fighting wars to non-traditional missions
- Increasing role of the military in international missions
- Internationalizing the forces themselves<sup>122</sup>

The legal mandate of the AFP is to: (1) Uphold the sovereignty, support the constitution, and defend the territory of the Republic of the Philippines against all enemies, foreign and domestic; (2) Promote and advance the national aims, interests, and policies; and (3) Plan, organize, maintain and deploy its regular and citizen reserve forces for national security. Dr. Clarita Carlos, former President of the National Defense College of the Philippines argues that the AFP has, from the time of its establishment, performed non-traditional military roles.<sup>123</sup>

Can the AFP fit the postmodern military mold? The answer is, “Yes,” based on the new emphasis of non-traditional military roles that the AFP is playing. It has engaged in socio-economic activities in support of government

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<sup>121</sup> US Department of State, Fact Sheet: *U.S. to Provide Anti-Terrorism Aid to Philippines*, 19 May 2003 <<http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/nato/03051906.htm>> (15 June 2003)

<sup>122</sup> Charles Moskos, ed., *The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces after the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 2.

<sup>123</sup> Clarita R. Carlos, “New Roles of the Military: Perspectives from the Philippines” (Paper presented during the Fifth ARF Meeting of Heads of Defense Universities/Colleges/Institutions, Tokyo, Japan, 27-31 August 2001), pp. 3-4.

programs in national building. Some of these missions include social mobilization projects such as the Floating Government Centers, and Adopt-a-Mountain – programs interfaced with economic development and poverty eradication. In December 2003, about a thousand members of the AFP's National Capital Regional Command augmented the number of policemen manning checkpoints as a response to the rash of kidnapping incidents.<sup>124</sup>

The Philippine Army is also involved in community assistance and rural empowerment through social services (CARES) aimed at enhancing the government's ability to deliver public services. The Navy's Floating Government Centers provide basic services to people in remote coastal areas. The AFP is also involved in literacy programs designed to teach people in rural areas. Other missions engaged the AFP in disaster preparedness and response as well as environmental defense programs. All these are part of the AFP's Civil Military Operations (CMO) designed to apply the "peaceful and humanitarian" approach in reaching out to the mass base support of the "enemies of the State."<sup>125</sup>

Since the early 1950s, the AFP participated in various peace operations such as the Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea (PEFTOK), the Philippine Air Force Contingent to Congo, and the Philippine Civic Action Group (PHILCAG) to South Vietnam. More recently, the Philippine Army has participated in UN operations including deployments to the Iraq-Kuwait border and in Haiti. In 1999, about 650 personnel participated in the International Force in East Timor under the UN Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET). Serving as the first commander of UNTAET was Lieutenant General Jaime de los Santos.<sup>126</sup> Currently, there are 66 personnel serving in support of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMIS), which includes eight observers.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Tarra Quismundo, "Soldiers to Back Up Police Manning Checkpoints," Inquirer News Service <[http://www.inq7.net/met/2003/dec/08/text/met\\_1-1-p.htm](http://www.inq7.net/met/2003/dec/08/text/met_1-1-p.htm)> (7 December 2003).

<sup>125</sup> The Role of Military in Building a Culture of Peace," 20 May 2000, <[http://www.batstate-u.edu.ph/peace/articles/role\\_of\\_military.html](http://www.batstate-u.edu.ph/peace/articles/role_of_military.html)> (16 June 2003).

<sup>126</sup> Jane's Sential Security Assessment – Southeast Asia, Philippines, 27 May 2003 <<http://www4.janes.com/search97/>> (15 June 2003).

<sup>127</sup> The International Institute of Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2002-2003* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 301.

In June 2003, the government announced sending a 75-member contingent to compliment 100 medical and social welfare workers to Iraq. In November 2003, the AFP also sent 145 soldiers for peacekeeping duties in Liberia.<sup>128</sup> This deployment provides not only UN visibility but also the necessary experience to help the AFP manage its own problems of insurgencies and separatist movements.

The AFP's deeper involvement and emphasis on non-traditional military missions directly impacts military professionalism. Their engagement with civil society in national development through CMOs significantly narrows the gap between the military and civilian community. By "civilianizing" the military, the officer corps and rank-and-file find themselves working more closely with their civilian counterparts. This exposure and cooperative interaction prevents the military professional from developing the mindset that they are apart from the civilian government or from society itself.<sup>129</sup> The visibility of the military through civic action programs also raises the military's image in impoverished and conflict areas.

The Revolution in Military Affairs is yet another challenge that the AFP must confront in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This subject is relevant and unavoidable for the military professional who must deal with the changed security environment. It also affects the modernization program in order for the AFP plans for its future mission and structure. Former Secretary of Defense Cohen described RMA "occurs when the nation's military seizes an opportunity to transform its strategy, military doctrine, training, education, organization, equipment, operations, and tactics to achieve decisive military results in fundamentally new ways."<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Daily Times, "Philippines Sends 145 Peacekeepers to Liberia," [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/print.asp?page=story\\_2-11-2003\\_pg4\\_16](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/print.asp?page=story_2-11-2003_pg4_16) (3 Nov 03)

<sup>129</sup> Raymund Jose Quilop, "Civil-Military Civil-Military Relations: An Overview of the Philippine Experience," Undated, <http://www.apan-info.net/partners/uploads/AFP-OSS-CMR%20for%20Kasarinlan.pdf> (31 January 2003).

<sup>130</sup> Annual Report to the President and the United States (Washington, DC Government Printing Office (GPO), 1999, p. 122.

Dr. Carlos interviewed the Secretary of National Defense and top officials in the AFP to obtain their perspectives on this RMA subject. The following are her conclusions:

- The security environment has indeed changed and this requires some rethinking in the way the AFP conducts its affairs;
- Among the challenges confronting the AFP, economic constraints loom large and are viewed as major obstacles to its modernization efforts;
- RMA requires shifts in doctrine, organization, operation, education, and equipage but the pace of change happening in other countries may not happen in the AFP for many valid reasons;
- Technological changes in information and equipment available to the military will necessarily engender changes in the way the AFP will conduct its war and peacetime functions; and
- Given an asymmetric relation with an adversary, the AFP can still fight a war by other means using less sophisticated but equally capable means<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Clarita C. Carlos, *Revolution in Military Affairs: Philippine Perspectives* (Paper presented at the Asia Pacific Governance 2000 Conference, Brisbane, Australia, 27-28 April 2000), p. 22.

## **V. THE FAILED MUTINY IN JULY 2003: TOWARD AN INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

On 27 July 2003, a group of 323 soldiers led by junior officers mostly from elite units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) took control of the Oakwood Premier Apartments, Ayala Center, an upscale shopping and condominium complex at the heart of Makati City.<sup>132</sup> Among their demands were the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo, the Secretary of National Defense Angelo Reyes, and Chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP) General Victor Corpus. They also wanted a forum to express their grievances against the government and the military establishment. After 22 hours of siege, the mutiny ended peacefully as the perpetrators, widely known as the “Magdalo Group,” surrendered to government negotiators without a single shot fired or any damage to property (see Appendix for timeline). The incident, however, not only challenged the legitimacy of the current regime but also left many questions about the condition of civil-military affairs in the country amid complaints of widespread corruption in the government including the military. Since then, very grim systemic problems beneath the surface have been exposed that would require a complete overhaul of certain civilian and military institutions to prevent a total collapse.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the failed mutiny and present a comparative analysis with coup attempts in the 1980s. What were the underlying reasons behind this latest military mutiny? Why did it fail and what was the Philippine government’s response? More importantly, this chapter presents the lessons learned and discusses the implications on military professionalism and civil-military relations in the country. Using the same lessons learned, this chapter also identifies areas where the US can possibly exert more influence to assist the Philippines in averting future coup attempts.

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<sup>132</sup> The Report of the Fact Finding Commission, Pursuant to Administrative Order No. 78 of the President of the Republic of the Philippines, 17 October 2003, p. 1.

Except for the usual voices of political opposition, this is by far the most serious challenge involving the military to President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration. Since the country's democratic consolidation following the demise of then President Marcos in 1986, the Philippines has experienced several instances of military intervention in political affairs. This brings into question the professionalism in the AFP and the critical role of institutions that are supposed to uphold democracy. This chapter suggests that professionalism, or the lack thereof, is not an independent variable that determines whether or not the military will intervene in political affairs. Instead, it is a combination of strong civilian institutions, an effective and efficient military institution, solid oversight mechanisms, and highly professional armed forces that will preclude military adventurism and keep soldiers in the barracks.

## **B. THE MAKING OF A COUP: THE ROOT CAUSES AND PROVOCATIONS**

Before the events of 27 July 2003, the rumors of a coup had been circulating for quite some time. According to the independent Fact Finding Commission (also known as the Feliciano Commission) report, by the latter part of 2002 there had been reports of some military personnel expressing grievances and discontent as well as verified reports of secret meetings attended by junior officers in various parts of the country.<sup>133</sup> Clearly, the grievances aired by the Magdalo Group are not something new but issues that continue to resurface in the military. In October 2002, a news article in INQ7.net detailed consternation in the military over the Base Pay Increase Law or the Republic Act 9166 signed by Macapagal-Arroyo in June 2002.<sup>134</sup> This pay increase had been proposed in 1987. This was also a complaint raised by rebel soldiers in 1987 and 1989 when coup attempts were launched against President Aquino.<sup>135</sup> The grievances expressed by the group included problems in the Armed Forces Retirement and

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>134</sup> Fe Zamora, "Disgruntled Workers Blamed for Military Restiveness," Inquirer New Service, <[http://www.inq7.net/brk/2002/oct/31/brkpol\\_6-1.htm](http://www.inq7.net/brk/2002/oct/31/brkpol_6-1.htm)> (20 Jun 03).

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

Separation Benefits System (RSBS), the AFP procurement system, the unauthorized transfer or selling of arms and ammunition, and other concerns that undermined the morale and welfare of AFP personnel. Some of these grievances were well-founded and complex and require not only institutional changes but also deliberate and immediate attention.

The Feliciano Commission's in-depth investigation revealed five major root causes of this recent military adventurism. The first was "The politicization of the military amid the erosion of civilian political institutions that had oversight powers over the military."<sup>136</sup> This same condition existed in the Marcos regime when the AFP was subjected to political roles in national development efforts during the "new society" movement. During martial law, junior officers "were invested with civil powers that inclined them toward political activism."<sup>137</sup> McCoy adds that as these young officers grew disillusioned because of corruption they "formed new political alliances and moved gradually toward revolt."<sup>138</sup> Likewise, the rebels of 2003 were disenchanted with, among other institutional problems, the government's overall inefficiency to solve corruption. This was exploited by a certain politicos to advance their agenda by creating an alliance with the Magdalo Group.

Secondly, the government failed to enforce the law and therefore deprived "the law of its power to deter."<sup>139</sup> This refers specifically to the government's failure to prosecute those involved in previous coup attempts and then granting them "unconditional amnesty in 1995."<sup>140</sup> At that time, the government was using the strategy of appeasement to satisfy the interests of the officer corps in order to discourage them from intervening in politics.<sup>141</sup> Most of those involved

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<sup>136</sup> The Report of the Fact Finding Commission, p. 132.

<sup>137</sup> Alfred W. McCoy, *Closer Than Brothers: Manhood at the Philippine Military Academy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 346-347.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 347.

<sup>139</sup> The Report of the Fact Finding Commission, p. 133.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Harold A. Trinkunas, "Crafting Civilian Control," in *Civil-Military Relations in Latin America* ed. David Pion-Berlin (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 167.

were absorbed back into the system and continued their military service. Some, including Victor Corpus who was promoted to Brigadier General and served as Chief of the ISAFP, even reached leadership positions. The prominent leader of those coup attempts, then Colonel Honasan, was never prosecuted and later was elected to the Philippine Senate.

A third root cause cited by the Commission was the AFP's key role in the fight against the communist insurgency and Moro secessionism which "creates civilian Government dependence upon the military."<sup>142</sup> According to MG Efren Abu, the Deputy Commanding General for the Philippine Army, this is precisely the reason the AFP cannot be divorced from politics, namely, these problems are political in nature.<sup>143</sup> The role of soldiers in these missions is two-fold: to fight insurgents and to conduct civil-military operations through development and consolidation tasks. The result is the strengthening of the AFP's political power and the exacerbation of military politicization.

Another major cause of the mutiny was attributed to "power grabs" in which civilian elites and politicians solicit military support to feed their personal and political ambitions.<sup>144</sup> This was the case during the two "people power" revolutions, also known as EDSA I and EDSA II, when the military shifted its support away from the incumbent regimes to the Corazon Aquino and Macapagal-Arroyo, respectively. As a result, the AFP gained much political leverage because of certain political elites' reliance on military backing for their political survival.<sup>145</sup> The investigations suggest that equipment and other paraphernalia used during the July 2003 mutiny cost a substantial amount of money which suggested monetary support from certain key civilian key figures, including deposed President Estrada. Furthermore, reference to Senator Honasan's "National Recovery Program" (NRP) by the rebel soldiers as the sole

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<sup>142</sup> The Report of the Fact Finding Commission, p. 133.

<sup>143</sup> Efren Abu, Taped interview by author, Fort Bonifacio, Manila, Philippines, 28 October 2003.

<sup>144</sup> The Report of the Fact Finding Commission, p. 133.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

solution to their grievances also suggests his involvement in the mutiny.<sup>146</sup> The NRP which addresses various issues such as peace and order, the economy, poverty, and corruption, was Honasan's political platform in his bid for the presidency. The same Senator, who was once also a rebel soldier, was also implicated as having served as "adviser" to the group during some meetings and presided over a "blood compact" ritual with junior officers on 4 June 2003.<sup>147</sup> In one of these meetings, Honasan also discussed "The Last Revolution," a document that emphasized "the use of force, violence, or armed struggle" to achieve the NRP platform because incumbent officials are unwilling to relinquish their positions.<sup>148</sup>

Finally, the Commission cites that "officers and troops under diligent and respected commanding officers did not join ... suggesting the critical role played by this breed of military leaders in dealing with the coup virus."<sup>149</sup> Considering the number of officers involved, they represent a very small percentage of the officers in the AFP and this indicates nonsupport from the majority of officers. While many members of the military recognized the legitimacy of the grievances, they disagreed with the method used by the Magdalo Group. Some of the enlisted members who participated in the mutiny claimed they were not even aware of the reason behind their involvement, except to follow the orders of their leaders. Like the coup attempts in the 1980s, the greater majority of officers did not subscribe to seizing state power. Instead, they were firmly grounded in the belief in civil supremacy and military professionalism. McCoy credits the Philippine Military Academy for effectively "instilling values of professionalism in a majority of its regular officers."<sup>150</sup>

A key finding by the Commission is "that the mutiny had been planned and was not spontaneous and that it was part of a larger plan to achieve political

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>150</sup> McCoy, p. 348.

change by military force.”<sup>151</sup> The Commission underscored the finding that while some of the grievances were founded, “the real impetus for the rebellion, the operative goal of the Magdalo group, was to seize power by force and implement Honasan’s NRP.”<sup>152</sup> The plan sought to establish a 15-member council after a three-day restoration of deposed President Estrada. Because the plot was preempted by the government, the group was forced to launch the mutiny after having failed to attain force requirements.<sup>153</sup>

### C. THE GOVERNMENT’S RESPONSE

Intelligence data gathering weeks before 27 July seemed to be more than adequate to forewarn the Macapagal-Arroyo government of an impending coup. Sparking speculations of a coup plot, frequent meetings attended by junior officers had been under surveillance since the beginning of July. The President also met with senior AFP officials who apparently have been approached by young AFP officers. Reported “restiveness” among junior officers was not taken lightly by the administration. For instance, AFP Chief of Staff Narciso Abaya was ordered on 18 July to “attend immediately to the grievances of the group.”<sup>154</sup> To address the complaints, the President also ordered the institutionalization of a “grievance mechanism” in order to “strengthen a culture of disciplined transparency in the Armed Forces … and insulate uniform from politics, avoid factionalism and promote professionalism.”<sup>155</sup>

On 22 July, amid coup rumors and reports of suspicious troop movements from various military units, particularly Scout Rangers and Naval personnel from the South, AFP Headquarters at Camp Aguinaldo, declared a red alert. The following day, the Macapagal-Arroyo hosted a dinner at the palace for

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<sup>151</sup> The Report of the Fact Finding Commission, p. 33.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>154</sup> Fe Zamora, “Macapagal Acts to Quell Restive Young AFP Officers,” Inquirer News Service, <[http://www.inq7.net/nat/2003/jul/18/text/nat\\_1-1-p.htm](http://www.inq7.net/nat/2003/jul/18/text/nat_1-1-p.htm)> (17 Jul 03).

<sup>155</sup> TJ Burgonio, “Macapagal Wants Grievance Mechanism in Military,” Inquirer News Service, <[http://www.inq7.net/nat/2003/jul/19/text/nat\\_12-1-p.htm](http://www.inq7.net/nat/2003/jul/19/text/nat_12-1-p.htm)> (18 Jul 03).

“grumbling” members of PMA classes ’94 and ’95. This was anticipated as an opportunity for the junior officers to have a dialogue with the President.<sup>156</sup> However, this did not occur. The non-dialogue apparently further frustrated and provoked the griping officers. In an attempt to pacify the soldiers, the President made quick visits to a few units near Metro Manila over the next two days and declared that the military tension was over.

In a surprising announcement on 25 July, Macapagal-Arroyo told a group of civil society leaders gathered at the EDSA Shrine for a thanksgiving mass that “there will be a coup attempt over the weekend.”<sup>157</sup> The following day, ISAFP Chief BG Victor Corpus briefed civil society groups on the startling details about the impending coup, which was also aimed at embarrassing Macapagal-Arroyo during her State-of-the-Nation Address scheduled on 28 July. The government’s discovery and preemption significantly impacted the coup planning. This prevented the Magdalo group from mustering their necessary force requirements and anticipated civilian support. Later that evening, the President ordered the hunt of up to 60 officers and men involved in a plot to overthrow the government.<sup>158</sup>

The events that transpired before and during the siege presented a calibrated response by government authorities, including the AFP and PNP forces. The government’s coordinated efforts displayed the military leadership’s full support of the Macapagal-Arroyo’s regime. The government’s negotiation team included retired AFP Chief of Staff General Roy Cimatu and two former putschists in 1989 (Scout Ranger Commander and West Point graduate, COL Danilo Lim and Undersecretary for Special Concerns, Abraham Purugganan). The Commission, however, determined that authorities failed to prevent the rebel troops from occupying Oakwood despite intelligence reports. Moreover,

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<sup>156</sup> Joselle R. Badilla and Fe Zamora, “President Hosts Dinner for Griping Military Officers,” Inquirer News Service, <[http://www.inq7.net/nat/2003/jul/24/text/nat\\_2-1-p.htm](http://www.inq7.net/nat/2003/jul/24/text/nat_2-1-p.htm)> (23 Jul 03).

<sup>157</sup> Martin Marfil and Dona Pazzibugan, “There Will Be a Coup over the Weekend: President,” Inquirer News Service, <[http://www.inq7.net/nat/2003/jul/27/text/nat\\_7-1-p.htm](http://www.inq7.net/nat/2003/jul/27/text/nat_7-1-p.htm)> (26 Jul 03).

<sup>158</sup> Inquirer New Service, “Macapagal Exposes Military Coup Plot, Orders Hunt,” <[http://www.inq7.net/nat/2003/jul/27/text/nat\\_1-1-p.htm](http://www.inq7.net/nat/2003/jul/27/text/nat_1-1-p.htm)> (26 Jul 03).

prematurely committing government troops in the area, they possibly exposed other hard targets that were more crucial to the government's survival.<sup>159</sup>

Immediately after the peaceful surrender of the mutinous soldiers, the AFP announced the creation of a special military task force to determine the cases to be filed or to commence court martial proceedings against the officers involved. During her State of the Nation Address on 28 Jul 03, Macapagal-Arroyo announced the creation of an independent commission to examine the renegade soldiers' allegation that defense and military officials were behind the Davao City bombings and a second fact finding body, later named the "Feliciano Commission," to "investigate the roots of the mutiny and the provocations that inspired it."<sup>160</sup>

#### **D. GRIEVANCES EXAMINED**

The following is a brief synopsis of some of the grievances expressed by the Magdalo group and the findings of the Feliciano Commission. For this case study, the discussion is limited to the complaints involving the RSBS, the AFP Procurement System, and the funding and consequential problems related to the AFP Modernization Program. Also outlined are the Commission's recommendations for the government or the AFP to rectify the problems.<sup>161</sup>

**(1) The Armed Forces Retirement and Separation Benefits System (RSBS):** Intended as a retirement and separation benefit system for the AFP, the RSBS was established on 30 December 1973 under Presidential Decree No. 361 and funded from congressional appropriations, mandatory contributions from AFP members, and tax-exempt earnings from the same fund. Since its establishment, however, the system has never been discharged as originally mandated to serve as a true pension system. Because of gross mismanagement which amount to criminal conduct, the system has experienced massive losses. Among the anomalies found by the Commission is that retirement benefits paid

<sup>159</sup> The Report of the Fact Finding Commission, p. 35.

<sup>160</sup> Juliet Labog-Javellana, "Two Bodies Formed to Probe Mutiny," Inquirer News Service, <[http://www.inq7.net/nat/203/jul/29/text/nat\\_6-1-p.htm](http://www.inq7.net/nat/203/jul/29/text/nat_6-1-p.htm)> (23 Jul 03).

<sup>161</sup> The Report of the Fact Finding Commission, pp. 44-125.

to AFP military personnel have been made from regular annual appropriations instead of the “perpetual self-sufficient” RSBS. This problem was never addressed by the defense bureaucracy or Congress. Structurally flawed, the system’s investment decisions are made by the AFP Chief of Staff and the Secretary of National Defense instead of by private investment professionals.

The Commission’s recommendations are as follows:

- Liquidate the present RSBS system
- Return the soldiers’ RSBS contributions
- Initiate an AFP Service and Insurance System
- Implement fully the recommendations of the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee including the prosecution of certain individuals involved in RSBS-related criminal conduct.

(2) **The AFP Procurement System:** Problems in the military’s procurement system have been a focus of corruption complaints not only by the Magdalo group but also by many members of the military including some in senior leadership. The system itself institutionalized the problem of corruption to a point where, according the retired Flag-Officer-in-Command Rear Admiral Guillermo Wong, military officers in certain positions within the system are “robbing the people blind.”<sup>162</sup> Wong exposed some of these anomalies in 2001 and it cost him his job and his possible appointment to the top position in the AFP.

The Commission cited a number of practices that demonstrate institutionalized corruption, a few are mentioned below. One practice is called “conversion” wherein allocated funds are transformed into cash short-circuiting or disregarding the procurement process. While some commanders may use “converted” cash to procure much needed but unfunded items, others resort to pocketing the cash. The supplier, with a false proof of delivery, receives his “cut” by the reduced cost conversion estimated at 30% less than the actual cost of the “undelivered” item.

A second practice that invites corruption is the way “Centrally Managed Funds” (CMF) and “Contingency Funds” are treated. Although these funds may

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<sup>162</sup> Guillermo Wong, Taped interview by author, Marina, California, 17 Aug 2003.

provide commanders with some flexibility, the lack of transparency and accountability results in personal financial gain for corrupt commanders. A third practice that is closely related to “conversion” is called “washing.” This refers to the “laundering” of “converted” funds for the benefit of another AFP unit. The unit doing the washing receives a certain “laundering fee,” which is in addition to the monetary cost retained by the supplier for doing the paperwork. Another practice that is inherent with the procurement system is “rigged bidding,” which encourages collusion between procurement officers and suppliers or contractors.

Another complaint cited by the Commission and closely tied to the procurement system is the distribution of arms and ammunition as well as Petroleum, Oil and Lubricants (POL). The AFP has acknowledged that it has limitations to properly monitor or account for these items. The report indicates that despite numerous safeguards to ensure proper storage, distribution, and disposal of firearms and ammunition, some are lost or end up in the hands of the enemy. With respect to POL products, “conversion” practice for a lower price is also a commander’s prerogative.

The Commission’s recommendations addressing the procurement system are as follows:

- Simplify the AFP procurement procedures to reduce the incentives for conversion and other forms of misappropriation of public funds
- Control commanders’ discretionary powers over the CMF by making the requirements of transparency more stringent and increasing the accountability of commanders
- Reduce the amount of CMF in the AFP General Headquarters and Service Headquarters by distributing more funds to the next lower echelon of command.
- Strictly implement control measures over supplies and impose substantive penalties on service unit commanders who fail to enforce established policies.
- Set tenure limits of two years for AFP finance and procurement officers.

### **(3) Modernizing the AFP: Funding and Consequential Problems:**

The sad state of the modernization program has been nagging the AFP for many years as a result of severe funding limitations compounded by economic crises,

poor planning, and bad decisions. The failure to modernize not only undermined the effectiveness of the AFP to perform its mission because of decrepit equipment or a lack of equipment but also seriously lowered the morale and welfare of the soldiers and their families due to critical problems in medical health service, housing, and other support requirements.

The Magdalo group complained of retired generals who refuse to vacate residences that are intended for officers in active service. The Commission investigated the housing complaint and found this is a complex problem that involves the sale of real estate in certain military camps in Metro Manila. A percentage of the proceeds was originally intended to help fund the AFP's modernization program. This report also found ownership litigations over some of the housing areas in question and the government's failure to recover some of the properties that were improperly acquired. To rectify these problems and re-channel the money from real-estate sales to the AFP's modernization, the Commission recommends the following:

- Vigorously pursue recovery of the former Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) and Navy Officers Village Association, Inc. (NOVAI) properties using the most competent lawyers that the government agencies can deploy. Further, if falsification of public instruments was involved in litigations, initiate appropriate criminal proceedings.
- Pursue recovery of the “squatted” land in Fort Bonifacio from civilian and military squatters by all lawful means, including the use of force if necessary.
- Substantially increase the AFP's share in Fort Bonifacio's sale proceeds to be allocated to the AFP Modernization Program.
- Reinforce the Office of the Ombudsman by increasing funding and other support enabling the Office to function independently and vigorously as the government's principal prosecution arm to prosecute corrupt public officials, even high-ranking officials in the AFP.

## **E. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

Using Juan Linz's analytical framework of the breakdown of democratic regimes, the Philippine experience provides a unique case study to explain the breakdown process. What were the factors that contributed to the mutiny and

near collapse of the Macapagal-Arroyo regime? Linz introduces the concepts of legitimacy, efficacy, and effectiveness as described below:

At the very least, *legitimacy* is the belief that in spite of shortcomings and failures, the existing political institutions are better than any others that might be established, and that they therefore can demand obedience ... More specifically, the *legitimacy* of a democratic regime rests on the belief in the right of those legally elevated to authority to issue certain types of commands, to expect obedience, and to enforce them, if necessary, by the use of force.<sup>163</sup>

*Efficacy* refers to the capacity of a regime to find solutions to the basic problems facing any political system (and those that become salient in any historical moment) that are perceived as more satisfactory than unsatisfactory by aware citizens... the *efficacy* of a regime is judged not by the actions of a particular government over a short span of time, but as the sum of its actions over a longer period of time.<sup>164</sup>

*Effectiveness* is the capacity actually to implement the policies formulated, with the desired results. The fact that even the best laws are worthless if unenforceable falls within this concept.<sup>165</sup>

Linz argues that democratic legitimacy requires the majority of voting citizens and those in power to abide by the rule of law and at the same time the citizenry must trust those in power to uphold the same rules.<sup>166</sup> He adds that efficacy and effectiveness over time "can strengthen, reinforce, maintain, or weaken the belief of legitimacy."<sup>167</sup> Legitimacy, efficacy, and effectiveness have a non-lineal relationship. Thus, the stability and performance of the regime increases when the values of the relations among the three variables are more positive.<sup>168</sup> Applying these concepts, Linz presents the breakdown of democracy

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<sup>163</sup> Juan J. Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, & Reequilibration* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 16-17.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., pp. 20-21.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>166</sup> Linz, p. 17.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

as a process that is not inevitable but begins with the basic supposition that political actors make decisions, as they are presented with choices, that affect the probability of regime survival. Depicted in Figure 2 below, Maria Rasmussen summarizes Linz's breakdown process whereby politicians have fewer options as the crisis worsens (as the process moves from left to right).

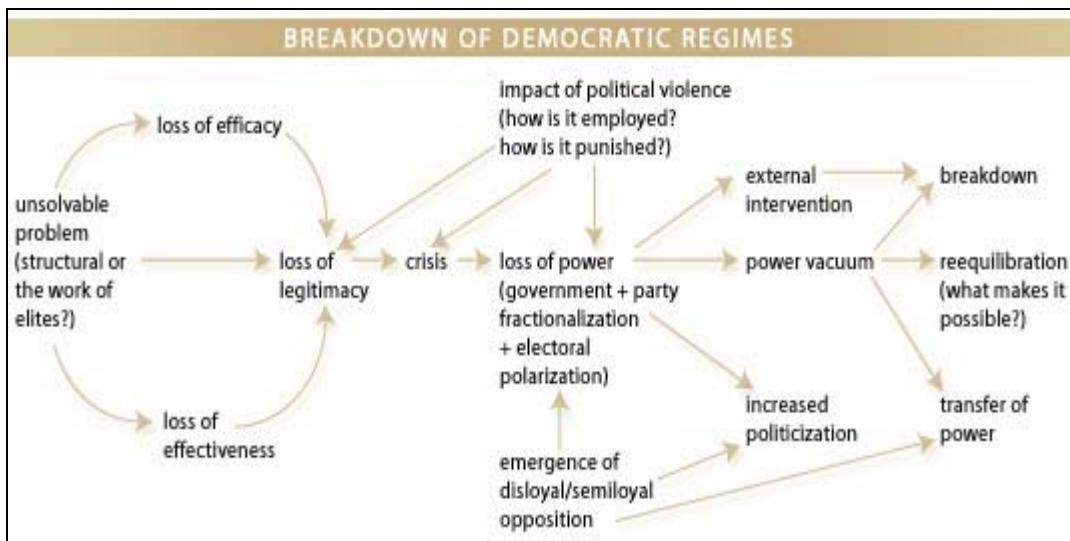


Figure 2. Linz's Breakdown of Democratic Regimes<sup>169</sup>

The events surrounding this latest mutiny demonstrate the emergence of certain political actors who may be characterized as being disloyal or semi-loyal opposition and who have courted the junior officers to challenge the legitimacy of the government. The grievances aired by the Magdalo group served as "evidence" of the regime's lack of efficacy and ineffectiveness. As discussed above, the root causes of the mutiny are systemic in nature and indicate weaknesses in both civilian and military institutions. For instance, the lack of a solid civilian oversight mechanism over military affairs has eroded the regime's efficacy and reinforced the disloyal or semi-loyal opposition's claim of the government's inability to fix the problems that are gnawing at the foundations of the AFP. Moreover, the failure of the government to enforce the law in the past reflects the ineffectiveness of the judicial system as an institution.

<sup>169</sup> Maria Rasmussen, Center for Civil Military Relations (CCMR), Naval Postgraduate School <[https://www.ccmr.org/course/studies.cfm?cci=part2\\_week3\\_topic1&printable=yes](https://www.ccmr.org/course/studies.cfm?cci=part2_week3_topic1&printable=yes)> (7 Oct 03).

Within the military establishment, the gross mismanagement of the RSBS and widespread corruption due to systemic problems such as the AFP procurement system have undermined the effectiveness the AFP. Consequently, the morale and welfare of personnel have suffered. These unsolvable problems have been exploited by disloyal and semi-loyal opposition to court a faction of the military to challenge the legitimacy of the Macapagal-Arroyo regime. Consequently, politicization increased for the group of idealistic junior officers who were partly enticed by Senator Honasan and his National Recovery Program.

In the July 2003 failed mutiny, the government's preemption of the coup plot averted potentially widespread political violence. If the Magdalo Group had been able to meet its force requirements, they could have attacked or secured critical hard targets and destabilized the government. Unlike the turnout in EDSA I and EDSA II people power revolutions, the Magdalo Group failed to rally mass support despite deliberate efforts by "anti-President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo" groups to recruit civilians to join the coup. On the contrary, the key elements of civil society including the Roman Catholic Church's Cardinal Sin and former President Aquino fully supported the Macapagal-Arroyo government. Moreover, although many understood the legitimacy of their grievances, they did not gain support from senior leaders in the military.

In Linz's model of the breakdown of democratic regimes, a loss of power and a power vacuum follows the crisis. This model held true during the EDSA I and EDSA II people power revolutions, but it was not the case for this failed mutiny. Benefiting from the full support of the AFP's leadership, President Macapagal-Arroyo maintained her role as chief executive. The regime's legitimacy remained intact and there was no loss of power, no power vacuum, nor a transfer of power. Instead, there was reequilibration after the peaceful surrender of the rebel soldiers. Linz define's reequilibration of a democracy as "a political process that, after a crisis that has seriously threatened the continuity and stability of the basic democratic political mechanisms, results in their continued existence at the same or higher levels of democratic legitimacy,

efficacy, and effectiveness.<sup>170</sup> Modifying Linz's model, the July 2003 failed mutiny and reequilibration may be depicted as shown in Figure 3.

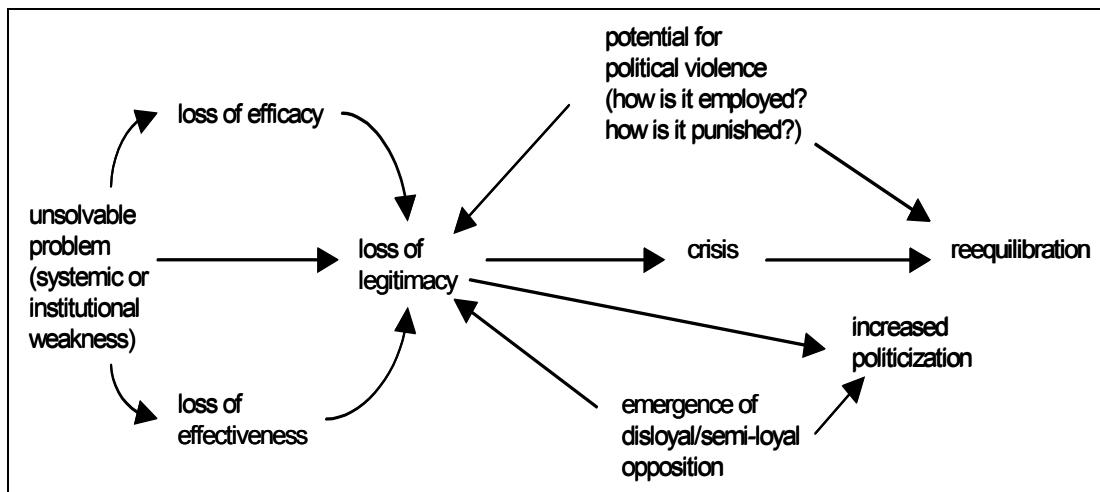


Figure 3. July 2003 Failed Mutiny and Reequilibration

In this case study, at least three conditions made reequilibration possible. First, the regime was able to convince the Magdalo group leaders that their grievances and other complaints would be addressed. The government negotiator's success in striking an agreement with the young officers resulted in a peaceful return to the barracks and paved the way for the creation of an independent fact-finding commission. Secondly, despite the negotiating team's failure to cite the applicability of "the law punishing coup d'etat as an offense cognizable by the civilian courts," the leaders of the Magdalo group agreed that they bore the full consequences of their actions while their followers would be prosecuted under the provisions of Article 105 of the Articles of War.<sup>171</sup> Lastly, the failure of the mutiny and the resulting return to the barracks did not cause the disloyal and semi-loyal opposition to continue their challenge to the regime's legitimacy. This is significant because even after the peaceful surrender of the rebel soldiers who occupied Oakwood, the existence of a residual force of turncoats remains a legitimate concern for the government.

<sup>170</sup> Linz, p. 87.

<sup>171</sup> The Report of the Fact Finding Commission, pp. 26-27.

Sustaining reequilibration depends greatly on the government's future success and political will to institute the recommendations made by the Feliciano Commission. Much of the grievances aired during this mutiny are a direct result of the government's failure to follow-up on the Davide Commission's recommendations in 1990. The government is still in a precarious situation and a mishandling of this situation will set the country back to an unsolvable problem. The 2003 Feliciano Commission warned that its recommendations not be neglected and shelved but stressed the necessity for a follow-up mechanism. The Commission implored that "one official of high competence, commitment and integrity, with direct access to the President and enjoying the trust of all political groupings, be designated with all dispatch, on a full time basis, with the task of implementing the recommendations."<sup>172</sup>

The Commission notes that this mutiny is the first in the country's history to be led by junior officers, which suggests three concerns: (1) a breakdown in the chain of command, (2) alienation of the Magdalo group from their senior officers, a sentiment that may be shared by other junior officers in the AFP, and (3) a general decline of professionalism in the AFP officer corps.<sup>173</sup> But was it really a result of a decline in military professionalism or a breakdown in the chain of command? The lessons learned in the July 2003 mutiny suggests that although there may have been a lapse of professionalism among the junior officers involved, by and large, the crisis was a product of weak civilian and military institutions.

Redefining the traditional Huntingtonian principle of "subjective" and "objective" civilian control over the armed forces, Trinkunas introduces two dimensions of a strong democratic civilian control: the combination of institution-alized oversight of armed forces activities and military professionalization.<sup>174</sup> His argument proposes that in order to have civilian control, politicians and bureaucrats must be able to "determine defense policies and approve military

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>173</sup> The Report of the Fact Finding Commission, p. 35.

<sup>174</sup> Trinkunas, p. 163.

activities through an institutionalized defense bureaucracy.”<sup>175</sup> Trinkunas also posits two concepts that are essential in crafting civilian control:

*Regime Leverage* is “affected by the opportunity structure that accompanies a transition and the civilian strategy that allows democratizers to compel the armed forces to accept reduced jurisdictional boundaries following a dictatorship.”<sup>176</sup>

*Regime capacity* is the “combination of government attention, resources, and trained personnel focused on defense issues,” which allows democratizers to institutionalize civilian control.<sup>177</sup>

Following the country’s democratic consolidation after the ouster of the Marcos dictatorship, regime leverage was attained largely through appeasement strategies aimed at satisfying the interests of certain senior-level officers in the AFP. Some of these strategies, such as short-term appointments of retiring generals to the AFP Chief of Staff post or the appointment ex-AFP Chief of Staffs as Secretary of National Defense, might have backfired contributing to the regime’s inability to rid the military of widespread graft and corruption. As demonstrated by the findings of the Feliciano Commission, regime capacity was undermined due to weak institutions in the defense bureaucracy. It may be argued therefore that despite the professionalism of the majority of the AFP officer corps, military intervention occurred because the government lacked the capacity to oversee and monitor military activities effectively. Observing this institutional weakness, Colonel Morales declares, “The Oakwood incident is only one outward sign of a fundamental and long-running flaw within the AFP. These flaws have been gnawing away at the foundations of the AFP and if left uncorrected will certainly result in a sudden and catastrophic collapse.”<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., pp. 165-166

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 166.

<sup>178</sup> Ricardo Morales, “Transforming, Not Reforming, the AFP,” unpublished draft article, Oct 03, p. 1.

In the final analysis, the July 2003 failed mutiny does not provide an accurate assessment on the state of professionalism in the AFP. It appears that only a small minority in the officer corps have succumbed, as in past coup attempts, to politicization through political patronage. What it exposed, however, are numerous institutional deficiencies, both within the civilian government and the defense bureaucracy, which eroded regime capacity. These loopholes presented easy opportunities for corrupt military officials to enrich themselves. This culture of corruption directly impacts the effectiveness of the military and generates disillusionment within the rank and file. Government attention was also lacking in the prosecution of criminal acts thereby losing its power to deter. In turn, certain semi-loyal or disloyal political opposition groups have exploited the weaknesses in institutions to advance their political goals. Therefore, it is the combination of strong civilian institutions, an effective and efficient military institution, solid oversight mechanisms, and highly professional armed forces that will preclude military interventions.

For the most part, the US has done a tremendous job of enhancing military professionalism through various areas of influence as discussed in this thesis. Military professionalism alone, however, does not prevent military adventurism if democratic institutions are weak. The US can exert a more positive influence by focusing on other programs that are geared toward strengthening civilian institutions and the defense bureaucracy.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In the past century, the relationship between the Philippines and the United States remained intact. The US certainly, directly or indirectly, contributed to the military professionalism in the Philippines. In tracing this relationship, it appears that the US always had its hand, visible or invisible, in influencing Philippine political, economic, and military affairs because of its interests in the region. In this “special relationship,” the most powerful stakeholder in the security of the Philippine state has been its American patron.”<sup>179</sup>

The US has left an indelible imprint, positive or negative, in military professionalism in the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Beyond the West Point-style uniforms cadets wear, the Philippine Military Academy as originally envisioned by General MacArthur continues to produce professional leaders in the AFP. Service academies in the US certainly produced graduates who became key leaders in the history of the Philippines. Additional research tracing the careers Filipino graduates at US service academies may present a better picture on this area of US influence. Training through IMET continues to be an essential element in shaping the professionalism of Philippine officers. Even though the 1994 IMET case study on the Philippines reflects disturbing observations, consideration must be given to the fact that a sizeable portion of officers who served during the Marcos regime still remain in the AFP, some of whom may be in leadership positions. Furthermore, because of the persistent budget deficiencies in the AFP, modernization of equipment will continue to lag behind the training that many officers receive through the program. The AFP will continue to be challenged with its internal and external security concerns, yet the existing bilateral security and defense arrangements with the US will continue to play a significant role to meet these challenges.

The end of the cold war, the withdrawal of the US bases, and the global war on terrorism changed the Philippine security environment. This presents

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<sup>179</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Practice*, p. 577.

major challenges for the AFP as it confronts this new and evolving environment. The end of the Cold War certainly diminished external threats; however, the armed forces have absorbed the primary responsibility of defending the territory from external aggression, a *de facto* role the US forces have assumed during their presence. With limited resources, the AFP must now also focus on the increased insurgencies. Terrorism also presents a different challenge for the AFP because of its global nature. The AFP stands to benefit a lot in terms of security assistance and increased joint US-Philippines military exercises. The elevation of the Philippines to a Major Non-NATO Ally presents another opportunity for the AFP as it stands to gain more access to American defense equipment and supplies. This also provides the two countries with an opportunity to cooperate in research and development.

The framework of the postmodern military is not really a new concept to the AFP because it was already involved in non-traditional roles, including international peace operations, since its mandate was established. Its involvement in national development through Civil Military Operations impacts military professionalism because it narrows the gap between the military and the civilian sector and creates a mindset that they are not apart from society. The Revolution in Military Affairs is another challenge that confronts the AFP as it faces the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It will directly impact future strategies, military doctrine, training, education, organization, equipment, operations, and tactics for the AFP to achieve its future objectives.

Even as the July 2003 mutiny presented a serious challenge to the legitimacy of the Macapagal-Arroyo regime, the mutiny created an opportunity for the government and the military establishment to evaluate the shortcomings of the defense bureaucracy and its implications on civil-military relations. While the experience demonstrated a lapse of military professionalism for a small sector in the AFP, it also exposed the continuing attempts of certain disloyal or semi-loyal politicos to court certain factions in the military to pursue their ambitions. To reemphasize the Commission's finding, "the real impetus for the rebellion, the operative goal of the Magdalo group, was to seize power by force and implement

Honasan's NRP." These power grabs will continue to haunt the AFP as long as there are institutional problems that continue to undermine the morale of soldiers.

The mutiny itself is also a manifestation of a deep-rooted and enduring institutional problem. It amplified the problem of corruption the AFP leadership has long ignored or brushed aside. Junior officers witnessed corruption among their leaders. As in the past, officers implicated in corrupt practices go unpunished. Allowing corruption to continue unabated is a failure in leadership, which breeds incompetence, contributes to ineffectiveness, and perpetuates a culture of greed in the AFP. What is alarming by the examples given in the Commission's report is not only the amount of money involved in these transactions, which sometimes exceed one million US dollars, but also the extent to which these anomalies occur within the AFP. If this is just the tip of the iceberg, the enormity of this institutional problem can very seriously damage the country. As the Commission warns, "The tragedy is that such a failure of the military organization would almost certainly push the Republic itself to the brink of disaster."<sup>180</sup>

As revealed by the Feliciano Commission, there is also a failure of the judicial arm of the government to prosecute, including high-ranking officials in the AFP (retired or active) who were involved in criminal acts. If the government is to have an effective oversight mechanism, it must be able to, through the Office of the Ombudsman and by the full-force of the law, investigate and prosecute even high-ranking officers in the AFP. The government also lacked the capacity to discharge the law effectively to expel illegal "squatters" who are occupying property intended for military personnel. These failures demonstrate the weakened state of government institutions particularly that of law enforcement.

The lack of military professionalism alone, therefore, is not the sole determinant that caused this latest military intervention in civilian affairs. The crisis was brought about by a combination of the lack strong civilian institutions that provide solid oversight and control mechanism, ineffective and inefficient military institutions that continue to dampen soldier morale, and a few

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<sup>180</sup> The Report of the Fact Finding Commission, p. 69.

unprofessional officers courted by a political faction. As the country looks forward to the Presidential elections in May 2004, the government can ill afford to ignore the recommendations by the Feliciano Commission. Failure to rectify the problems through immediate and deliberate institutional reforms can only lead to more military adventurism.

## APPENDIX. JULY 2003 FAILED MUTINY TIMELINE<sup>181</sup>

18 July	Inquirer and INQ7.net report on restive junior officers, mostly from PMA Class '95. President Macapagal-Arroyo orders the AFP Chief of Staff Gen Abaya to investigate their complaints.
19 July	The Inquirer reports that the junior officers had been seeking the advice of Senator Gringo Honasan and their their "bible" was the senator's National Recovery Program platform.
22 July	INQ7.net reports that 15 members of the Scout Rangers and two Naval personnel were held by authorities in Iloilo; Camp Aguinaldo declares a red alert amid rumors about an impending coup.
23 July	The President hosts dinner for the junior officers and dismisses coup rumors.
24 July	The President leads the turn-over ceremonies at the First Scout Rangers Regiment in Camp Tecson, San Miguel, Bulacan and joins in the traditional "boodle fight" with soldiers.
25 July	The President makes quick visits to the Marines' training center in Ternate, Cavite; the 15 <sup>th</sup> Strike Wing of the Philippine Air Force in Sangley Point, Cavite, and the Cavite Naval Base in Cavite City, and declares the "military restiveness is over."
	Later that afternoon, the President tells civil society groups at the EDSA Shrine that there would be a coup "this weekend."
26 July	Ten suspected leaders declared unaccounted for by the AFP
	5 A.M.: Emergency meetings held by Abaya, National Security Adviser Golez with general staff and senior officers
	Around 10 A.M.: ISAFP Chief BG Victor Corpus briefs Cardinal Sin and civil society groups on coup scenarios. The civil society groups set up command center at the EDSA Shrine. The President calls an emergency meeting of the Cabinet and the AFP and Philippine National Police (PNP) top brass.
	12:00 Noon: PNP Chief Ebdane effects full alert status nationwide as a contingency measure. All PNP field commanders were directed to secure vital installations and key establishments.
	7 P.M.: Task Force Libra (TF Libra), the counter-coup composite unit of the AFP, commanded by MG Efren Abu, was at full strength.
	8 P.M.: The President issues her first statement that a band of soldiers had abandoned their posts. She orders a hunt for rogue junior officers, saying they would be court-martialed. She

<sup>181</sup> Sources: The Report of the Fact Finding Commission and Inquirer News Service, <[http://www.inq7.net/nat/2003/jul/28/test/nat\\_10-1-p.htm](http://www.inq7.net/nat/2003/jul/28/test/nat_10-1-p.htm)> (1 Aug 03).

	also warned “unscrupulous politicians” not to exploit the situation.
27 July	1 A.M.: The President wraps up meeting with key Cabinet officials in Malacanang.
	1 A.M.: Over 300 rebel soldiers quietly enter the premises of Ayala Center in several groups and plant powerful bombs in parts of Glorietta in Makati City, storm the mall’s basement parking area, and occupy the Oakwood Premier. The rebel soldiers wear red arm bands. Another band of soldiers with red arm bands is spotted trooping out of Fort Bonifacio. Security guards in the Ayala Center are helpless as rebel soldiers in full battle gear seize their service firearms and order them to leave the premises.
	Two government command groups dispatched to Makati. Marines and Army officers later joined PNP at Makati. Marines under Teodosio prepositioned around the car park behind Oakwood.
	Around 2 A.M.: Joint Operation Center in Camp Aguinaldo receives report of troops moving from Metro Manila from Ternate, Cavite. Armed soldiers wearing red armbands seen crossing EDSA and moving toward the Ayala Center.
	Around 3 A.M.: The President meets with the AFP top brass and key Cabinet officials. Troops securing Malacanang, particularly the Presidential Security Group, wrap blue bands around their arms.
	3:20 A.M.: The rebels’ “perimeter security” in the Ayala Center is in place, and an officer issues a threat to set off the explosives should government troops attack.
	Around 3:30 A.M.: Some motorists and late-night shoppers finally realize something unusual. Rebel soldiers direct traffic and keep dumbfounded motorists out of the area. A closed van fails to notice the restrictions, drives straight into the area, and runs over a sign post erected by the rebels. A rebel soldier fires a warning shot.
	4 A.M.: Task Force Ayala (TF Ayala) of the Marine Corps activated and occupied positions with infantry and armor, encircling Ayala Center Complex.
	Around 4:30 A.M.: The rebel officers issue a three-page statement, detailing their accusations against the Macapagal-Arroyo administration.
	Sunrise: Tension remains high, with rebels already firmly in place. At least two snipers can be seen atop Oakwood.
	Around 8 A.M.: Malacanang begins a marathon press briefing aired live on TV, with more than 50 politicians, including senators, congressmen and mayors, taking turns expressing support for the President and appealing to the junior officers to

	lay down their arms.
	9 A.M.: The President issues her second statement, giving the mutinous soldiers up to 5 P.M. on Sunday to surrender or be removed by force.
	Around 9:40 A.M.: Deposed President Joseph Estrada is transferred from the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC)– a precautionary measure, the Palace explained some two hours later.
	10 A.M.: Navy LTSG Antonio Trillanes, the leader of the renegade soldiers, says they are not negotiating with the government. He tells ABS-CBN in a phone interview from Oakwood the rebel officers do not expect to get a “proper forum” when “the President and the AFP leadership” are the object of their complaint.
	1 P.M.: The President issues Proclamation 47 declaring a state of rebellion. She issues general Order No. 4 directing the AFP and the PNP to conduct the necessary measures to quell the rebellion.
	Before 3 P.M.: Estrada is transferred back to the VMMC.
	Around 3 P.M.: At least 10 rebel soldiers march out of Oakwood and return to the government fold.
	Around 3:30 P.M.: MGen Emmanuel Teodosio, Philippine Marine Corps Commandant, announces that about 50 rebel soldiers have already turned their backs on the mutineers and have rejoined the government.
	Around 4:50 P.M.: Rebel officers begin a chaotic press briefing, with Capt Milo Maestrecampo appealing for understanding. “Don’t judge us. We are not terrorists. Whatever may happen here, we can say we stood our ground.”
	5 P.M.: Before the President’s 5 P.M. deadline expires, Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye announces that the deadline has been extended by two hours, to 7 P.M., citing late-breaking developments relayed by General Roy Cimatu, who is negotiating with the rebels.
	Around 5:20 P.M.: Senator Gregorio Honasan arrives in Oakwood to talk to some of the rebel officers.
	5:30 P.M.: Authorities raid what they say is an operation center of the Madalo rebel group in Mandaluyong City.
	Around 7:30 P.M.: Palace extends deadline indefinitely, as negotiations led by Cimatu continue.
	9:30 P.M.: An agreement reached between government negotiators and the rebel group.
	Around 9:50 P.M.: In a Palace press briefing, a beaming President announces that, after several hours of negotiation, the day-old rebellion has been resolved. She says the mutineers will be investigated and punished according to the law, and

	civilian supporters will be charged. In the same briefing, AFB Chief of Staff Abaya says: "We have essentially quelled the rebellion."
	Around 10:10 P.M.: Army Commanding General LTG Gregorio Camiling is set to bring the mutineers to Army Headquarters in Fort Bonifacio.
	Just before midnight: Last batch of mutineers arrive in Fort Bonifacio.
28 July	President's State of the Nation Address (SONA)
29 July	Fact Finding Commission (Feliciano Commission) created under Administrative Order No. 78.

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